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**BY ELLEN DOUGLAS DELAND.**

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"GIRLS," SAID HOPE, LOOKING UP FROM HER BOOK.



# Three Girls of Hazelmere

## *A STORY*

BY

ELLEN DOUGLAS DELAND

ILLUSTRATED BY

WILLIAM F. STECHER

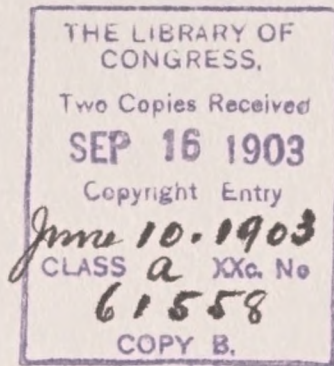


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THREE GIRLS OF HAZELMERE.

MADE IN  
HONG KONG

03-22820



To Louise Carroll Thomas







## ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE	
“ ‘ Girls,’ said Hope, looking up from her book ” . . .		
<i>Frontispiece</i>	16	✓
“ She pointed to the narrow street which led down a steep hill ” . . . . .	78	✓
“ He had not yet been able to decide which of the three girls he most admired ” . . . . .	132	✓
“ ‘ He must be an official,’ said Hope ” . . . . .	205	✓
“ Lois was happy ” . . . . .	276	✓







# THREE GIRLS OF HAZELMERE.

## CHAPTER ONE.

ONCE upon a time, as the old story books always begin, there were three friends who lived in an old New England town not very far from Boston. The name of the town was Hazelmere, and it had wide streets shaded by elm trees like many other New England towns, and fine houses, many of which were built long years ago and painted white with porches and columns and Colonial doorways. Every house had its garden filled with lilac bushes and roses and mignonette and all the sweet-smelling flowers that grow. There never was such a place as Hazelmere for sweet smells in the springtime.

The names of two of the friends were Diana Stuart and Lois Putnam; the third was Jane Hope Conway, much to her lasting regret. She was susceptible to names, and she always thought that Diana and Lois might have stepped out of some delightful book, while Jane — who would ever think



of giving a heroine of one's own free will such a plain, everyday name as Jane? It seemed incredible to her that her parents, who in every other particular did just what was right, should have committed so irretrievable a mistake as to have had her baptized Jane! However, there was a certain amount of consolation to be derived from the fact that her second name was Hope, and although at first her parents had intended to call her Jane, they soon fell into the habit of speaking of her and to her as Hope; it seemed to suit so much better the child's nature, for they found as she grew older that she rarely looked upon the dark side of affairs.

As she said herself, the name of Jane was one of those things that had to be borne, just as one makes up one's mind to straight hair and a nose less beautiful than the noses of one's neighbors, and legs and arms that are forever getting too long for one's skirts and sleeves. Diana was tall also, but when she outgrew her frocks they were given away, and new garments were made for her. She was an only child, and at that time her parents were rich. The Conways, on the contrary, had very little money, and Hope had an elder sister whose gowns were made over for her, and from her they descended — what was left of them — to her little sister Marjorie.



Diana and Lois were both very pretty, each in her own way. Diana had dark hair and great dreamy dark eyes and a perfectly straight nose. It seemed to Hope in those days that she was a very enviable person, especially for her name and her nose. Lois was not unlike a lovely wax doll with golden hair and blue eyes, and Hope never could decide which of her two friends she would choose to resemble if a fairy were to appear before her and promise to grant her wish. If she were given three wishes, she would have chosen Diana's nose, the curly golden hair of Lois, and the power to write books.

This last attribute seemed to her more desirable than anything else in the world. She looked upon an author as a thing apart, and she never forgot in after years her emotions upon hearing that a lady who had written a book was staying with some people at Hazelmere. Hope hung about the neighborhood and haunted the gate, very much to the disgust of Diana and Lois, who did not feel as strongly as she did about literary pursuits. Perhaps it would have been different for them if it had not been wild strawberry time. To Hope the taste of the great world of books meant more than that of any berry, and she refused to be persuaded to leave the hal-



lowed precincts. They went off with their baskets, and she perched upon a stone wall near the house of Mrs. Graham (whom the writer was visiting) and waited. Surely, though authors were no doubt a separate race, they must need fresh air and exercise as much as did more ordinary people — although perhaps the Celebrated Lady was writing another book, and would therefore remain secluded from the world until it was finished.

On the third afternoon Hope's patience was rewarded. The front door opened, and Mrs. Graham came out, accompanied by the stranger. Hope scanned her eagerly, curiously. She looked very much like other people. I am not sure that Hope expected her to wear spectacles, and to have books sticking from her pocket, and to be writing as she walked, but for some reason the little girl experienced a distinct feeling of disappointment. There was absolutely nothing to mark the Celebrated Lady as a being remote from the everyday world. And as she passed the small person on the wall she was actually talking with much animation about clothes!

It was Hope's first great disenchantment. She hurried to the wild strawberry pasture, and found Diana and Lois sitting in the shade with very few berries in their baskets and very red lips and fin-



gers. They were making plans, as usual. They asked Hope if she had seen "her," and she answered "yes," and immediately inquired as to the state of the strawberry crop. From her earliest youth Hope disliked telling the depth of any emotion, even to her most intimate friends. It may have been because they always went so deep that she dared not confess them.

Diana and Lois were busy making plans for the future. The three friends always did this when they were not playing. The plans altered as they progressed in years. At that time the three were eleven, and to their kindred tastes life in a play-house seemed most desirable. It was to be built in the Stuarts' garden, and was to have a real stove in it. There they would spend the remainder of their days, and even of their nights, receiving calls from their respective families, when they felt a desire to see them, occasionally entertaining them at dinner, and living upon doughnuts and "effident taffy," cooked upon the little stove.

When they were thirteen they enlarged their horizon, and the paths of their inclinations began to diverge. Diana bought some paints and spent much of her leisure in sketching, always attempting the most difficult subjects within reach. Lois de-



cided that blue was the most becoming color that she could wear because it matched her eyes; and Hope wrote poetry. She carried a notebook in her pocket in which she scribbled the beginnings of innumerable rhymes like this:—

“ See the dancing river  
With wavelets all aquiver ! ”

Sometimes she progressed a little farther in the poem, and sometimes she did not; but it was all very interesting, and it was then that words as words began to exercise the extraordinary fascination for her that lasted all her life.

It was when the girls were fifteen that they began to talk about Europe, and when they were seventeen they actually started forth upon their travels.

Great changes had come into Hope's life by that time. Her father and mother were dead, her elder sister, Alice, was married, and she and Marjorie lived with her. Hope was fond of George Howard, her brother-in-law, and the new home was as happy as one could expect under the new circumstances. At sixteen one can bear changes better than one can later in life; but she missed her parents more sorely than was ever guessed, and she longed to get



away for a time from the place where so many old associations made it hard to live. If she could once stretch her wings and fly, and get a glimpse of the world that lay beyond Boston, she felt sure that she should in time be content to return and settle down.

To Diana Stuart, also, life had not been without changes. Her father had met with business reverses, and he had been obliged to let the beautiful old place in which the family had always lived, and move to a smaller house on High Street. Diana made plans for self-support, and as her chief interest lay in painting, she decided to give her whole time to the study of art. The fortunes of Lois Putnam remained unchanged, and so, therefore, did she. As yet there had been nothing to disturb the gentle even ripple of her life.

The three girls were at the Stuarts' one afternoon in the late winter when the subject so often discussed came up again. They were in the room at the top of the house which Diana called her studio. Here she had gathered all the most extraordinary-looking objects that the house contained, and others from "junk-shops" and old furniture stores that her friends had bestowed upon her, while pictures of varying degrees of excellence adorned the walls.



She had an easel, of course, and a large stock of unfinished portraits of all her friends. Lois was her favorite model, for she was always willing to sit perfectly quiet and be painted, and it was such a source of satisfaction to Diana to do her hair. Hope found it difficult to sit still long enough at a time, and Diana never wished to "do" her if she could get any one else—which was fortunate for Hope, though at the time she secretly lamented her lack of charms.

On the afternoon in question Lois sat at the window with a dainty bit of embroidery in her hand; Diana was at her easel, and Hope was in a low chair by the bookshelves. No one had spoken for some time, and the only sound was the crackling of the fresh log just thrown upon the fire, and the beating of the February storm against the windows. It was snowing hard.

"Girls," said Hope, looking up from her book, "do you suppose we could possibly do it?"

"Do what?" asked they.

"Go abroad."

"Of course, sometime. We always intended to."

"I know we have always intended to, but that isn't doing it. We always intended living in the playhouse, but we never really did it."



"I trust we never shall," laughed Lois, snipping off a new needleful of silk as she spoke.

"But I really mean this," said Hope, pulling her chair nearer to the others. "I have just been reading about some girls who went abroad and had the most perfect time on scarcely any money, and the most exciting adventures any one ever heard of. Why can't we do it?"

"They only have exciting adventures in books," observed Lois. "In real life we just go tamely along doing nothing in particular. I expect to pass the rest of my days doing just what most people do, — living here in Hazelmere, going to Boston, traveling a little, and perhaps going abroad some day, meeting a few new people, perhaps. I shall marry somebody nice, I suppose, and in fact do just what other people do until the end of my life."

"And you probably will," said Diana; "while Hope will have every kind of exciting experience that is possible. It is just the difference in you two girls. Hope can't go to Boston for the day without an exciting experience of some sort. I don't know what would happen if she were to go abroad."

"I wish we might try it," said Hope, "and I don't see why we can't. The trouble would be about the



money. I mean the difference in what we should have to spend. I have so little, and Lois so much."

"And I am just about halfway between," said Diana.

It never occurred to any one of them that they should not do this thing together. Had they not planned and played as one mind since they were five years old?

"Have you got enough to go on, Hope?" asked Diana, who in spite of her artistic proclivities had her practical moments.

"I will tell you," said Hope, rising and walking restlessly about the room, as she was wont to do in moments of excitement. "I have the money, a thousand dollars, that my great-aunt Jane left me for my name. It was the least she could do, I think, after passing on such a name as it is! That I can do as I like with, for she said so expressly in her will. Of course George and Alice would never let me use any of the money my father left us, for we need that to live upon. It is very little, you know, and I fully expect to be a teacher. My idea is this: to go abroad, — say for a year, — and see a bit of life. Then come home, go to college, graduate, and be a teacher for the rest of my days — when I am not writing books."



"Until you marry," put in Lois.

"I don't expect to marry, my dear child. My hair is too straight and my tongue is too sharp."

"You could curl your hair and curb your tongue," said Diana.

"I don't want to do either, but I *do* want to see the world! Girls, I must! *We* must! Now, shall we do it? Shall we make up our minds, here, now, this very instant, to surmount all the difficulties that will rise up to prevent us, and go abroad next winter?"

Her enthusiasm fired her friends. Diana dropped her paint-brush and Lois her embroidery. They stood in the centre of the studio in a circle, hand clasping hand.

"We will do it!" they said in chorus.

And they did it.

But not in the way they at first planned. Of course their idea was to go together and with no fourth person to intrude upon their treasured intimacy, but the parents and guardians all rose as one man and put a stop to that.

"Go without a chaperon!" exclaimed the elders. "The mere fact of your thinking such a thing possible shows that you are not fit to be trusted alone."



"But we are American girls," they urged, "and therefore quite able to take care of ourselves."

"It is just because American girls have those independent ideas that they make themselves so conspicuous abroad," said George Howard, who had travelled considerably. "Two of you are noticeably good-looking, in fact, remarkably pretty, and the third is so energetic and enterprising that she would never pass unnoticed in a crowd. Of course you must have an older woman with you."

"I think you make a very unnecessary distinction between us," remarked Hope. "I know as well as you do that Diana and Lois are pretty and I am not, but you need not keep telling me so. It is just like a brother or a brother-in-law to emphasize the fact."

"I named no names," said George, laughing. There was nothing he enjoyed more than teasing Hope.

At last they were made to see that it was quite out of the question for three inexperienced girls to travel alone—that is, they were forced to agree, although Hope always declared that they might have done it. All through the long summer days they discussed their plans, studied guide-books, and, last but not least, hunted for a chaperon. None of their relatives were able to go, so they were forced



to look beyond their families. One would have thought that she would be easy to find, especially as all their friends joined in the search, but a fatality seemed to pursue each lady who consented to go with them. Their choice fell first upon a distant cousin of the Stuarts, but some one became ill and she was needed at home. Then a certain lady in Hazelmere became the object of their hopes, but complications arose in her business affairs and she could not go.

In the beginning the girls were very fastidious, and maintained that their chaperon must possess all the qualities most desirable in a travelling companion; but as time went on they became less particular, and when within two weeks of the date fixed for sailing they heard of a certain Mrs. Webster who lived in Baltimore, and who wished for companions with whom to spend the winter abroad, they felt that it was their last chance, and that she must be theirs, whoever and whatever she was. It was Hope who heard of her from Mrs. Graham, who lived in Hazelmere, and with whom the author had stayed so long ago, and the girl hurried at once to her friends to ask their advice.

“Mrs. Graham doesn’t know her,” said she, “but she is the friend of a friend of hers, so of



course she must be nice. She is a widow, and not at all old."

"I am glad of that," said Diana, "for she won't get tired, and will be ready for anything."

"But if she is a widow, won't she be sad?" asked Lois.

"Not necessarily," Hope replied, with the air of one who was thoroughly conversant with the subject. "He may have been dead for some time. I am sure she is just the one for us."

"Has she any children?"

"I haven't heard of any; but of course if she has, they would be left at school. However, that is a small matter, if we can only get her to go with us. I should be willing to overlook half a dozen children, wouldn't you? If we can't go without a chaperon, and Mrs. Webster is the only woman in the whole United States who will consent to serve in that capacity, it seems to me we must take her and all her belongings and be thankful. Let us write to her at once."

As usual Hope acted as penwoman, and a note was composed and despatched at once to Mrs. Webster, setting forth in glowing terms the advantages that would be hers if she would consent to act as chaperon to three girls of Hazelmere who desired to travel in Europe.



“Our plan,” Hope wrote, “is to pass the greater part of the winter in Germany, where we can have the advantages of the picture-galleries and the music. We cannot spend a great deal of money, so we are going to stay a long time in each place.”

Then she described herself and her friends as best she could, suggested insinuatingly that Mrs. Webster would make a most desirable fourth, and that therefore their party would be of just the right number, and ended up with a gallant declaration that they would do their utmost to accord with her wishes in every possible way. All together it was a very nice letter, and the girls were all greatly pleased with it and with themselves. They asked Mrs. Webster to telegraph her reply, as the time was getting so short, and then Hope took the note to Mrs. Graham, who in turn sent it to her friend, who was then to pass it on to Mrs. Webster. Naturally this consumed much precious time, and then Mrs. Webster was obliged to take more time in which to think it over, so that nothing was heard from her until the Saturday before sailing. Then came the eagerly awaited telegram:—

“Will go. Meet New York Tuesday. Telegraph hotel and steamer.”

There was great joy over the receipt of this mes-



sage, and they all forebore to scold each other for not having told her that they were going on the *Westernland* of the Red Star Line, two state-rooms on which had been engaged for some weeks. It was October, so the rush of travel toward the east was not great, and they were going at winter rates. They did not know how to arrange about the division of rooms at first, but they finally decided to cast lots about that as well as about every other question that should come up to be decided in the course of their travels.

"Three slips of paper in a book," said Lois, "and the one who gets the longest slip rooms with Mrs. Webster on the steamer."

Hope's sister Alice arranged the slips. The others were abnormally short, but Hope drew one that measured an eighth of a yard at least. She was the person singled out by fate to room with Mrs. Webster. All through that year of travel Hope usually drew the longest slip.

The eventful Tuesday came at last, and with it the inevitable farewells. For days the girls had been saying good-by to the casual friends, and had been the recipients of innumerable work-bags, and needle-cases, and wonderful objects made of linen and fitted with pockets, to hang upon the wall of



one's stateroom, and to hold everything that could possibly be needed upon a journey from hairpins to hot-water bags. Boxes of candy and huge bunches of flowers came pouring in upon them at the last moment, and it was fortunate that they were to be accompanied to New York by some of their relatives who would help carry these gifts. Each of the girls had a steamer rug done up in shawl-straps, and a nice-looking bag. They had been receiving advice all summer from their travelled friends as to what to wear and what to carry, so there would have been no excuse for not being properly equipped, and Hope had a book which told them what to do under any circumstances that could possibly arise, with questions and answers in four languages at the back.

It was very hard that morning to say good-by to Alice and Marjorie and the baby, and Hope almost wished that they had never thought of going to Europe, but the farewells were over at last, and they were in the train, hurrying toward New York as fast as steam could take them. Mr. and Mrs. Stuart, Mr. and Mrs. Putnam, and George Howard went with them, and all the way George was giving Hope directions. She was to act as paymaster on the trip, and he provided her with some foreign money



and gave her lessons in reducing dollars and cents to francs and centimes.

"You may expect to make a few mistakes," said he; "but after the first week or so things will become easier. Above all, beware of the cabmen. They will do their best to cheat you, but put on your most majestic air and down them."

"I can't be majestic, George!" Hope replied. "I know I am tall enough for it, but somehow I never could cultivate that grand air. Diana has it to perfection."

"Yes, Diana has the air, but not as much of the spirit as you have. A very little practice would give you more presence."

Hope laughed so long and merrily that one or two of the other passengers turned to look at her, and smiled in sympathy.

"George, you are too absurd!" She drew up her head and waved her hand. "*Cocher, une voiture! Combien —*"

"Hush, Hope! Everybody is looking at you!" whispered her brother-in-law. "I trust that all of you will be extremely careful not to attract attention in any way. It is most important for you to remember that when you are on the other side. They are not used over there to the freedom you have here in America."



Thus he prattled on, and I fear that much of his advice, excellent though it undoubtedly was, went in at one of Hope's ears and out by the other, for she was too much excited to pay much attention to his words of wisdom.

When they reached the hotel and inquired for Mrs. Webster, they learned to their dismay that she had not yet arrived. It was then late in the afternoon, and all the evening they awaited her coming, sitting in the hotel corridors, scanning each lady who passed, and wondering if she could be their future travelling companion, but she did not appear. At last they went to bed. The girls occupied two rooms that had a door between, and as a natural consequence they talked long after they should have been in bed and asleep. They had just settled down to quiet, however, and were trying to realize that at that time to-morrow they should be on the heaving ocean, when they heard a peculiar noise at the door and found that a telegram had been pushed underneath. It was from Mrs. Webster, and announced that she had missed her train, but would meet them the next day at the steamer.

"A pretty beginning!" said Diana. "Do you suppose she will miss trains all through Europe?"

"I haven't a doubt of it," said Lois, who, proper



in every respect, was always punctual. "What shall we do with two unpunctual people?"

"I assure you, I never missed a train in my life, if you mean me," replied Diana, hastily.

"The shoe must pinch, for I mentioned no names," returned Lois. "But you know, Di dear, when you are thinking of a picture, or when your mind goes off on one of those journeys that it sometimes takes, you would be very apt to forget all about real trains."

"Not with me to prod," said Hope. "I mean to keep strict watch over the whole party."

"One would think that you were to be the chaperon instead of Mrs. Webster," said Diana. "But I am getting very sleepy. I hope there won't be any more telegrams to-night."

And presently she and Lois were sound asleep, but Hope lay awake far into the night, wondering if they would like Mrs. Webster. Their relatives had made all kinds of inquiries about her and had received most satisfactory information, but that did not prove that the girls would find her a congenial companion. She had a son who was to be left at school and who would probably come over to her in the summer, and Hope fell asleep while she was trying to picture the Websters. It was broad daylight



when she awoke, and Mrs. Putnam was knocking on the door to tell them that it was high time to get up. With a rush of returning consciousness the girls realized that this was the day so long awaited; that this was the last time they would open their eyes to see their native land for many a week to come.



## CHAPTER TWO.

ON the wharf were the bustle and confusion that only a steamer's dock knows, — huge drays, trunk-laden carriages, piles of stuff, busy people. The ship's company drawn up in a line along the approach to the gangway, little groups of passengers coming hurriedly with their friends, others who had arrived early dashing back for something supposed to be forgotten. The great ship lying alongside the wharf, steam puffing from her smoke-stacks, flags flying — the general look of alertness plainly visible upon her showing that her few days of rest were over, and that she was again to breast the high seas. And above all the sun shone down upon her freshly painted decks, and flashed gayly upon her brasses, as well as upon the blue waters of the Hudson and the thousand and one craft that flecked its surface.

The Hazelmere party arrived early, and after inspecting their staterooms and looking over the ship, they sat down in the saloon and awaited the coming of Mrs. Webster, some of them constantly



going on deck to scan the wharf in the hope of seeing her approach. They were all secretly very nervous lest she should fail to put in an appearance, and Mrs. Stuart and Mrs. Putnam retired to a corner to discuss the matter in whispers, while the two fathers and George Howard shook their heads, and said they had felt all along that it was a crazy plan and ought never to have been attempted.

The girls knew that they were quite capable of ordering them home again, and they were prepared to see their elders pick up the luggage and hurry them on shore at any moment, but fortunately, just when hope was at its lowest ebb, a carriage dashed up to the dock. Mr. Howard was on shore, watching, and he seemed to know by instinct that this carriage contained the object of their desires. The girls gazed at him eagerly, and presently they saw him coming up the gangway, a lady upon his arm, and followed by a small boy in knickerbockers.

It was really quite imposing to see them coming arm in arm, George carrying innumerable bags and shawl-straps and umbrellas, and Hope was so much interested in that part of it that she forgot to wonder about the small boy. Mrs. Webster was a tiny woman. Her head scarcely reached George's shoulder, and she was very slight. She might be



described as fragile-looking, and she had the air of needing some one to lean upon, just as she was now leaning upon George. Hope had an immediate vision of the year that was to come. No doubt she would go through Europe clinging to the three girls. However, it might be worse. She was unmistakably a gentlewoman, and she was attractive to look at.

"I am *so* sorry!" she said, as she approached, speaking with a faint drawl and the dwelling upon the vowel sounds that is characteristic of all Baltimoreans. "I *hope* you have not been worried! You see I had to change my plans at the last minute and bring Freddy."

George introduced them, and they all shook hands, and scanned her with great curiosity. It must have been a trying ordeal, but she did not appear to mind it.

"It was all owing to Freddy," she continued. "I never *dreamed* of bringing him, but at the last moment he simply *would* not be left. Freddy dear, shake hands with all these ladies."

"Can't!" said the boy, thrusting both hands into his pockets. "There's altogether too many of 'em. I want to see the ship."

"Oh, Freddy dear!" said his mother. "*Do* be



careful!" It was a phrase the girls were destined to hear many times before they returned to their native land.

They all laughed and declared that there were a good many hands to shake, and then the bell rang to warn the stay-at-homes that the moment of departure had come, and they all kissed and shook hands and said good-by with exaggerated cheerfulness. The two fathers and George each assured the girls in turn that they considered them quite fortunate in their choice of a chaperon, for she seemed very charming, while the two mothers whispered that she looked delicate, and they hoped the boy would not be a trouble, and the girls must be sure to write just how they got along.

"We depend upon you to tell us everything, and if you have any difficulty of any kind, come home at once."

And then the friends and relatives went on shore, and soon the ship began to move, oh, so slowly! that the girls scarcely knew that they were going, and presently they had swung out into mid-stream, and the faces on the wharf grew less and less distinct until, what with the increasing distance and the tears that would come into their eyes, it became only a confused mass of color and waving handker-



chiefs, and before very long even that was gone. They had sailed!

The voyage was like many other voyages, very uneventful. It was so late in the season that the passengers were few, and with the exception of one family they were not particularly interesting. To be sure, there was Freddy. He could always be depended upon to vary the monotony. When there was nothing else available with which to amuse himself he would get lost, and then would ensue a frantic search, his mother dissolved in tears in her steamer chair, while the three girls hunted in every nook and corner of the ship that they were allowed to penetrate. It was a perpetual game of hide and seek, and he was usually found grinning with delight at the success of his ruse. He was nine years old, small and active as a terrier, with the face of a cherub and the disposition of an imp.

For the first few days out Mrs. Webster did not leave her berth, and Freddy was committed to Hope's especial care.

"I know you can be depended upon," said his mother. "Your very name implies strength. Jane Hope Conway! It is a beautiful name! Even though I feel the motion so terribly, it quite cheers me up to think of your name."



"Mrs. Webster!" exclaimed Hope, greatly pleased, "I have always hated it!"

"My dear girl" (she pronounced it "gyurl"), "it is such a dependable name! That and your face combined make me sure that you will see that dear Freddy doesn't get into mischief while I am ill. *Please* ring for the stewardess! Oh, this dreadful ocean! If it would only stand still for just one minute!"

Hope went on deck and sought her friends.

"Have you seen anything of Freddy?" she asked. They were rolled up in their rugs and were reading, comfortably ensconced in their steamer chairs. Hope's stood next, invitingly empty, and she longed to lose herself in the interesting book she had taken from the library.

"I saw him a little while ago," replied Lois. "He was looking over the railing at the porpoises. He seemed to be very happy and innocent and peaceful. Don't bother about him, Hope. Why don't you sit down and have a good time with us? It is a shame that you should have so much care of that boy."

"It is all because of my name," said Hope, as she yielded to temptation and got into the chair. "My name has been a burden to me all my life, and now it has got me into this scrape. Mrs. Webster has



placed Freddy in my care, just because I am unlucky enough to be called Jane Hope Conway. It makes her so cheerful and quite sure that I can be depended upon. She doesn't agree with Shakespeare, does she?"

"Isn't she odd?" said Diana. "Different from any one we ever knew. I am rather glad she is. It makes such a variety."

"Ye-es," returned Hope, slowly and somewhat doubtfully, "she is very different from Boston people, but I like her. If you had to room with her, you would find that she is almost too different. She seems to require such an immense amount of care, and with Freddy just across the passage, always losing one of his shoes or his sponge or something which she never can find—I always have to go help her look. In fact, she is too ill to do much for him or for herself. Girls," she lowered her voice, "I hate to say it, and I suppose you will fairly take my head off for even hinting at such a thing—but—but—do you suppose she is really so ill all the time or only a little lazy?"

"Hope!"

It was precisely the outburst she had expected, and she laughed aloud.

"Hope! She is perfectly lovely! Just as fasci-



nating as she can be! And seasickness is a terrible thing. You only had a passing qualm, so you can't judge, but *we* know what it is!"

Hope was silenced, but not convinced.

"It is a very funny thing," said she, presently, "that you all seem to be rather proud of being susceptible to the motion. I have noticed that all the people who have been sick love to talk about it, and each one tries to outdo his neighbor in a vivid description of symptoms. But, oh, where is that boy?"

The deck steward came along at that moment with his tray full of cups of *bouillon* for the morning luncheon, and the girls forgot Freddy while they sipped their beef-tea and gossiped about their fellow-passengers. Hope had just swallowed the last delicious drop when she became conscious that some one was standing in front of her, looking at her with a glance that without exaggeration might be described as ferocious.

The newcomer was a man, short and stout, with a fierce gray mustache, and black eyes which added to the expression of anger depicted in his face. By some subtle intuition Hope knew that his rage was connected with Freddy. Perhaps it was because her guilty conscience told her that she should



have searched for the boy before giving herself up to the pleasures of the *bouillon*. She said nothing, but looked at the stranger inquiringly. Presently he spoke, firing the word at her like a bullet from a pistol.

“*Mademoiselle!*”

Hope bowed with as much dignity as she could muster. She was in the depths of the chair and enveloped in her rug, and it was difficult to be dignified under those circumstances.

“Zat leetle boy,” said the man, speaking with a strong foreign accent, “he iss your bruzzer?”

“No; I have no brother.”

“Zen he iss your cousin?”

“No; he is not my cousin.”

“Zen what iss he? He iss somesing, and whatever he iss he iss a leetle bad boy. *C'est un petit diable, Mademoiselle!* Come wiss me, and I shall show you *le méchant*.”

Hope disentangled herself from the folds of the rug, which seemed to be interminable, Lois and Diana also rising from their chairs, and the three hurried off with the little foreigner, who was at least a head shorter than Hope. It surprised her afterward to think that she could have been afraid of a person so much smaller than herself, but



he was so angry, and she was in such suspense about Freddy. She knew that she ought to have looked for him before.

“Ze cap of my grandson he hass cast into ze sea,” said the little man; “a cap for which I haff paid two of your American dollares — *dix francs, Mademoiselle!* He hass insulted my wife by calling her ze name of a beast, ‘ze peeg’! And now he sits in silence and he gaze—he—what you call it? *Il nous regarde avec un—eh!—ah, qu’est-ce que c’est donc ce mot là*—it is zee word ze same by which one mounts to ze upper rooms of ze house.”

Hope looked at him vaguely. What was he talking about?

“Stairs, do you mean?”

“Ah, yes, zat iss it! He stares at Madame until she makes known to me zat she shall chump into ze water. And she shall do it, Mademoiselle! She hass effer done zat which she hass announced she shall do.”

When they reached the corner of the deck where Madame was sitting the girls did not wonder at her threat. Neither did they wonder that Freddy had stared at her. She was an elderly Flemish woman who did not speak English. She was very stout, with a waist of immense proportions; her hair was



done in small tight braids, covered by a net, and surmounted by a soft round hat which might once have belonged to her husband, and she wore very large spectacles. She was seated in an upright camp-chair, a hand on either arm, and she looked ready to spring from it without a word of warning. Opposite to her, crouched down on the floor of the deck, and leaning against a staple which supported one of the life-boats, sat Freddy Webster, his eyes fixed upon his victim. The child had an unflinching gaze that was disconcerting even after a few moments, and according to the husband of Madame it had continued now for fifteen minutes.

"He must depart!" cried Monsieur. "I shall speak to *ze capitaine*. I shall punish him!"

"Freddy," said Hope, trying to speak very calmly, "come with us."

By way of reply he shut one eye without moving another muscle of his face, and continued to stare at Madame with the remaining one.

"Freddy," said Diana, Lois, and Hope together, "come with us."

With lightning rapidity he changed eyes, gazing now with the left while the right was closed. The three girls glanced at one another. They had known Freddy but three days, but that was ample



time to discover his characteristics. He was absolutely immovable when he so determined. Hope hated to descend to persuasion, but Monsieur was growing more and more angry.

"Lois," said she, "have you any more of those chocolates?"

"Lots of them," returned Lois, promptly.

"They are mighty poor," said Freddy. "You'd better throw 'em over to the steerage children." He was now staring at the lady with both eyes.

"I have a box of candy that I haven't even opened," said Diana. "It is in my trunk. I will go now and get it out. Will you come with me?"

"Will you give me a quarter of it?"

"Yes."

"I won't go for a quarter. Will you give me half?"

"Yes; I will give you half."

"I won't go for half."

"Freddy!" exclaimed Hope, losing all patience. "What nonsense! You *must* come!"

"I won't unless she gives me the whole box of candy."

"But it is a five-pound box!"

"Good!" said he, smacking his lips and staring. Here Madame spoke rapidly to her husband in



a strange guttural language, which they afterward learned was Flemish. Monsieur turned to them.

"*Mesdemoiselles!* Iff zat boy, *le méchant!* iss not removed ziss instant, I spik to ze *capitaine*, and he iss placed in ze hold. In ze hold, I zay, and I means what I zay." Then he continued to speak in Flemish, and it had an alarming sound, although they, of course, could not understand a word.

"Freddy," said Diana, "if you will come with us and promise never to tease this lady again, nor look at her, nor go near her or any of her relations again during the voyage, I will give you the whole of that five-pound box of candy, and I will play two games of checkers with you every evening."

It was noble of Diana, for she loved candy and disliked checkers. Freddy rose to his feet.

"Honor bright?" said he, still staring.

"Honor bright, with Lois and Hope for witnesses."

"All right, I'll go. Good morning, Madame!" He made a low bow. "You're exactly like a peeg. I didn't really throw that cap overboard, Mister. It's here in my pocket."

He produced the cap and gave it to the man, upon which the small grandson, who had been hiding around the corner during this affair, came forward and put it on. The girls surrounded their



charge, and hurried him away before he should have time to do or say anything else. Diana brought the candy and gave it to him — it was a lovely box from the best confectioner's in Boston — and then they had to bribe him not to eat it all. They were having a most difficult and exciting time, and the girls had begun to wonder how they should be able to endure the remainder of the voyage, when help came from a most unexpected quarter. They had forgotten that they were not alone on deck and were all talking at once, Freddy in the midst and rapidly becoming more and more aggravating, when they heard some one laugh. It was a jolly laugh, and it came out with such sudden force that Hope suspected that the laugher had been endeavoring for some time to suppress it. Glancing up quickly, the girls saw, leaning against the railing, a boy whom they had noticed among the passengers before, but with whom they had not spoken. He sat at a different table from theirs, and they had not chanced to meet. He was a nice-looking boy of about sixteen, with brown hair and eyes. His face was thin and rather pale, but it wore an expression of cheerfulness and good nature that was extremely winning.

“Is that kid your brother?” he asked, lifting his cap as he spoke.



"No, indeed, he isn't!" replied Hope, with asperity.

"Not the brother of any of you? Then what is he?"

"That is just what that Dutchman asked, and I don't wonder. He is not the slightest relation to any of us. He is the son of our chaperon."

"Why, I didn't know you had a chaperon. I — that is — we thought you were travelling alone."

"Of course we are not," said Hope, rather tartly. "We are with Mrs. Webster, but she has been ill ever since we sailed, and we have the care of Freddy."

"Why don't you chuck him overboard? I should if he belonged to me. I saw the fuss you had with the old Dutch couple. I say, youngster, you behaved like a baby that time. And if you're going to eat all that candy they've given you, I should say you are something of a peeg yourself. Do you want a game of shuffleboard?"

To the utmost astonishment of his friends, Freddy accepted this invitation without seeming to resent the remarks that had preceded it. He went off with the stranger, and they were left to themselves to discuss the situation. They decided to tell Mrs. Webster all about it as soon as she should be well enough to bear it, and in the meantime they would



be very firm with Freddy and indulge him no further than was absolutely necessary to keep the peace.

"I don't think she will mind about it," said Hope. "She thinks everything he does of that kind is funny, and she is evidently accustomed to his doing much worse. She spoils him terribly, and I am really sorry for the boy. He is bright and attractive in a great many ways, but he has found out that he can ride right over his mother. Isn't it a pity that he has no father?"

"I wonder who the laughing boy is," said Lois. "He seems very nice. He has a mother and an older brother. Both the sons are perfectly devoted to the mother, and she is so sweet with them."

"Yes," said Hope, "I have noticed them, and I have been longing to get acquainted with them. Perhaps now we shall."

And they did that very afternoon. The wind changed, and it grew too cold for them to sit on the deck that had thus far been the most comfortable. The chairs were carried around to the other side, and the deck steward happened to place those of the Hazelmere party next to those of the lady and her sons. She smiled at the girls very pleasantly, and the younger boy, the one who had rescued



them from Freddy in the morning, jumped to his feet.

“Mother,” said he, “these are the young ladies I was telling you about.” Then, turning to the girls, “I want to introduce you to my mother, Mrs. Manning. I don’t know your names, so you will have to tell us.” He said it so nicely and with so much self-possession that, as Diana said afterward, “you could see at once that he was a gentleman.” They all looked at Hope, so she introduced them, and they all laughed and said that there could not be much formality on board ship, and presently they were all talking away as if they had always known one another.

Mrs. Manning was not pretty, but she had a fine face, and such a sweet, motherly way that the girls loved her at once, and she took such evident interest in them that they had soon told her all about their plans for going abroad together and about their trials with Freddy Webster.

“Reginald described to me your experiences this morning,” said Mrs. Manning, “and I was very much amused. I don’t wonder you find it rather trying. I told him that I should like to meet you, and I intended to make a point of speaking to you to-night if I could find you. I have not been able



to be much on deck before this, for I am a very poor sailor, and find it wiser to stay in my berth the first few days out, until we get past the 'Banks.' Perhaps Mrs. Webster will be better now. The sooner she gets on deck, the sooner she will recover. Did you say that she is from Baltimore? Then I wonder if she can be Mrs. Frederic Webster whose husband died a few years ago?"

"Yes, that was her husband's name."

"Then she must be my old schoolmate, Alice Howard! Tell her that Emily Kane is on board, waiting to see her most anxiously. Why, this is very interesting! We went to boarding-school together near Baltimore. My home has always been in New York, and I have lost sight of many of my old friends, but I am sure she will remember me."

They talked for some time, the other son joining them before long. His name was Arthur, and he reminded Diana of Abbey's pictures of Sir Galahad in the Boston Public Library. He looked much older than the young Knight of the Round Table, but he had the same fair hair and blue eyes, and the expression of being "without fear and without reproach" that is so wonderfully depicted in those paintings. Hope knew her Tennyson almost by heart, but she found "The Idylls of the King" in



the ship's library that very night, and the girls sat up late reading them. They called him "Sir Galahad" among themselves from that time.

They found that he was a physician and, having graduated from a medical school, was going over to one of the Paris hospitals for a course there. As Reginald, the younger boy, had overstudied and outgrown his strength, he and his mother were to spend the winter there also. The father, as the girls learned afterward, had been dead for some years.

They passed a very pleasant afternoon, and when they went below recounted their experiences to Mrs. Webster, who was greatly interested. She remembered Mrs. Manning perfectly, and was so anxious to meet her again that she grew stronger at once and was quite ready to go on deck the next morning soon after breakfast. After this the voyage was much more enjoyable. The two ladies talked over old times, while the young people walked about, explored all parts of the steamer that were open to them, and played games.

Freddy became so devoted to Reginald that he ceased to annoy the girls. He was a good boy in the main, but, like every one else of an active temperament, he needed occupation to keep him happy.



The girls wished that the Mannings were to be with them longer that the peace might last, but they were to separate as soon as they landed, the Mannings going directly to Paris, while the others stayed a few days in Antwerp and then went on to Brussels. Their plan was to spend the winter in Munich, which city they had been told possessed many advantages in the way of art, music, and cheapness.

The days passed quickly, as days do on board ship, and at last dawned that on which they first saw land. When they went on deck after breakfast the coast of England lay before them, and all that day they were sailing past those white cliffs. The weather was perfectly clear, the sky a bright blue, flecked with a few white clouds, and the water of the Channel as bright a green, while a stiff breeze covered it with dancing white-caps.

The next day came the sail up the Schelde, as it is called in Flemish, or the *Escant Fleuve*, as they say in French, a river which separates Holland on the left from Belgium on the right. They passed innumerable little Dutch villages, all neat and trim-looking, with here and there a windmill and always a church, while straight lines of carefully clipped trees marked the roadways. Then came the



approach to Antwerp, the spire of the Cathedral, which at first sight seemed so far away, growing larger and more imposing and more and more beautiful as they drew near. It all seemed very strange and inexpressibly foreign, and it was almost impossible to realize that they were about to leave the ship that had been their home for so many days and set foot in that hitherto far-away and wonderful land called Europe.

Hope leaned against the railing watching the scene, and feeling that she must be in a dream from which she should surely awaken and find herself again in Hazelmere, the little New England town across the rolling sea. She was recalled to real life by Reginald Manning.

"I scarcely recognized you in your land 'togs,'" said he. "Everybody looks different. Have you seen the old Dutch lady, Freddy's friend, in her bonnet and cloak? But it is time to say good-by. We have to make a rush for the train to Paris, and we are hoping to get through the Custom House quickly or we shall miss it."

And then the good-bys were said, with great regret on both sides, for they had all become such excellent friends that it was hard to part. They had not the slightest expectation of meeting again



on that side of the water, but the future is ever a sealed book. Things are very apt to turn out quite differently from the way that one thinks will be the case, and seeming calamities sometimes lead to good results. If Diana Stuart had not — but this is anticipating.



### CHAPTER THREE.

THE population of Antwerp is largely composed of Flemish people, and the lower classes speak that language in addition to French, which is the polite and also the official language of Belgium. Fortunately the members of the Hazelmere party, with the exception of Freddy, all spoke French, but when they had landed and were waiting on the dock for their baggage to be inspected by the Custom House officers, it seemed to Hope Conway that they had reached the Tower of Babel. Such a confusion of tongues as there was, and such a chattering about matters which she thought must be of vast importance to call forth such streams of eloquence! So it appeared then, but before she had been in Europe many weeks she learned that this was not by any means the case. The smallest affairs of life, the weather, the time of day, are discussed with such vehemence and volubility, such wealth of shrugs and gesticulation, that to the uninitiated it appears probable that a serious quarrel is



imminent, and then in a moment the seeming combatants part with bows and smiles and protestations of mutual esteem. It never fails to surprise the more reserved and self-contained Anglo-Saxon.

The Americans emerged from the grasp of the Custom House very satisfactorily, the official apparently taking it for granted that they were not engaged in smuggling. With a grand air and a bland smile he chalked their luggage and dismissed them, and they were free to engage a cab and drive through the narrow streets of the old town to their hotel. They were all in the best of spirits, and they did not in the least mind being squeezed five in a cab with Freddy trampling on their toes, while he was so glad to leave the steamer that he was in a very amiable frame of mind that afternoon.

The next morning, after a good night's sleep in the quaint little hotel, and after their first experience of a European breakfast in their rooms, of coffee or chocolate and rolls, they sallied forth to see the town. It was a fresh, clear morning, the sun shining brightly as it had not done for many weeks, they were informed by the elegant personage in gold lace and brass buttons at the hotel. The girls took him to be an officer of the guards at least when they first saw him, but they found that he was



merely *monsieur le portier*, who always sits in a little office or *bureau* at the door of a hotel, receives travellers with extreme politeness, makes himself generally useful in giving information, and expects a handsome recompense at the moment of departure.

The girls had been studying their Baedeker's Guide Book with great care, and had decided that the *Place Verte* should be the object of their first walk, to see the Cathedral. They also decided to keep together this morning, Mrs. Webster warmly urging this plan.

"My dear girls," said she, "I haven't the smallest bump of locality. I positively can't find my way around Philadelphia, which every one declares is the easiest place in the world, so what I shall do in a foreign city, with all the queer little streets that they have, I am sure I don't know. You won't leave me, will you? You will all stay with me? And Freddy, dear, you must be careful. You won't frighten mother, will you, dear?"

Of course it was the very thing he at once planned to do. Hope always maintained that most of the scrapes that Freddy got into emanated from suggestions given by Mrs. Webster. However, this first morning the boy was absorbed in all that he saw, and had no time to think of pranks.



The streets of the old part of Antwerp are very narrow, with little sidewalks not wide enough for more than two persons to pass each other. The street cars, or "trams," seemed odd and primitive, and there was a great variety of strange vehicles drawn by horses of unusual size and strength. Then there were the little carts, pushed by men or more often by women, and drawn by dogs harnessed underneath. They saw the industrious dogs of Flanders then for the first time, and a hard-worked faithful race they seemed to be. There are no dogs of leisure in Antwerp.

The Americans marched along in procession. Lois led the way, for she, exact in everything, had an excellent idea of position. She had studied the map, and was now able to walk to the *Place Verte* with as much ease as if she had been born and brought up in Antwerp. She looked very pretty that morning, for the sea voyage had deepened the color in her cheeks and excitement gave lustre to her blue eyes. Then came Diana, full of the enthusiasm of the artist, her dark dreamy eyes lingering upon the quaint scenes and grasping all the details of possible pictures. After her walked Mrs. Webster, with Freddy held tightly by the hand, he hopping first into the street and then on the sidewalk, and



clamoring for them all to look at this or that. Hope brought up the rear, stalking along with an aggressively American expression of countenance, the red-bound Baedeker in her hand, and her head full of doubts about *francs* and *centimes*, and fear lest she should allow herself to be cheated in the next bargain, as she was quite sure had been the case with yesterday's "cabby." Her anxiety on this score caused even her buoyant spirit occasionally to quail.

They walked on until they emerged upon an open square, and there they all stopped with one accord. It was the *Place Verte*, on one side of which is the Cathedral. The *Place* was a blaze of glory, for a flower market was in progress, and it was filled with chrysanthemums of every shade of color. Old and young women in fantastic costumes were selling to the people who flocked across the square, many of them going to and from the Cathedral, which lifted its lofty spires far above the surrounding buildings. It is one of the most beautiful Gothic churches in the Netherlands, and it gave the Americans an odd sense of the newness of their own country to stand and look at that beautiful old pile, and remember all that it had witnessed since the first stone was laid, away back in 1352.



For Antwerp has been through many vicissitudes. The city was six centuries old when the Cathedral was begun, and it was an important and wealthy place in the Middle Ages, until, at the time of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, it surpassed in prosperity even Venice itself. Vessels from all parts of the world came sailing up the broad Schelde to bring spice and sugar from Portugal, silk and gold from Italy, and wines from France and Germany. It was a great centre of commerce, and its manufactures of carpets and stuffs, of gold and silver, were sent all the way to Arabia and India.

Then came the cruel sway of the Spaniards, when the terrors of the Inquisition sent thousands of the inhabitants to take refuge in foreign lands. The town was pillaged and its buildings injured, while much of its commerce fell into the hands of the Dutch. Napoleon afterward gained possession of the city, and he planned great improvements for it. Since then its fortunes have gone up and down with the changing chances of war, until now in these days of peace it is regaining its old prestige as a commercial centre.

During the three days that the party spent in Antwerp they explored every quarter of the town. In the evening they wrote letters and journals, and



—alas for Hope!—they made up their accounts. Freddy all that time behaved like a good little boy in a book. Mrs. Webster was in the best of spirits, and all went merrily. She seemed younger than any of them when the mood possessed her, and the girls wrote to their relatives at home that they had indeed been fortunate to find so charming a travelling companion.

On the last evening they separated soon after dinner, for they were to take an early train for Brussels the next morning, and the three girls were left together in the large room which they shared. It was a dark-looking room, as those in foreign hotels are apt to be, hung with heavy curtains and filled with ponderous pieces of furniture. There was a great table in the centre, and here they had gathered all the candles they could muster, while behind the candles they had placed their hand-mirrors, propped up in all sorts of ingenious ways hoping thereby to gain a little more light. Diana was absorbed in some photographs that she had bought, Lois was writing letters, and Hope was busy dividing their expenses into five equal parts.

“There are so many complications to our accounts,” said she at last. “If I could divide them among us three, it would be an easy matter, or



even among four, but there is Freddy, who sometimes ought to pay a full share and sometimes ought not. He is such an important factor in everything."

"It reminds me of some old rule in arithmetic. Isn't there one about the chief factor?" said Lois.

"Oh, don't!" exclaimed Diana. "Freddy is bad enough as he is without being associated with a rule in arithmetic."

"Why would it not be a good plan to let Mrs. Webster manage her own expenses?" suggested Lois. "Hope pay for us three, and she for herself and Freddy?"

"That sounds easy, but really it is rather impracticable, I should think," said Diana. "It is better for one person to do all the paying. And then she has such difficulty with the money. She is always making mistakes and appealing to Hope for help."

"However, she is perfectly charming," said Lois.

"Yes, perfectly charming," returned Hope, somewhat absent-mindedly, straightening a candle that was tilting over from the bottle in which they had placed it and rescuing one of the mirrors from a dangerous angle. "Girls, do you ever feel in the least homesick for the land of the dollar and plenty of light?"



"Never!" they both exclaimed with vehemence. "Except of course to see the dear people there. Candles give a far prettier light than gas. Surely you are not homesick already, Hope? Surely *you* are not looking on the dark side, of all people!"

"Oh, no, not by any means! I am as enthusiastic as I was in the old days when we planned the trip, long before we had any idea of really coming. Well, Di, what are you going to say?"

Diana had put aside the photographs, and now sat gazing at her friends with such rapture that Hope knew something was coming.

"Only that it exceeds my wildest anticipations," said she. "Oh, girls, to think that I am actually seeing all these wonderful pictures that I have dreamed about and read about! The marvellous Rubenses in the Cathedral, and all those old Dutch pictures in the Museum! I could stay here for months studying those paintings. My eyes have been hurting a little to-night, and it has made me think of what a terrible thing it must be to lose one's sight, or not to be able to use it as much as one wants to. I believe I couldn't bear it. I should just die."

"I don't believe so," said Hope. "People don't



die as easily as that. There are so many things that we have to bear. I often wonder what will come to us three as we go on in life."

"What is the use of wondering?" asked Lois. "Why not wait until the calamities come, and in the meantime have as good a time as possible?" She was always placid and practical.

But the subject possessed great interest for the others. They had already been through more experiences than had Lois, and were therefore in many ways older than she.

"I haven't the least idea what sort of a character I have," said Diana. "Sometimes I feel as if I didn't amount to very much. I am not cheerful and strong and deep, like Hope, nor steady and industrious like Lois."

"That sounds as if you were giving her a reference for her next place," said Hope, laughing. "'Steady, industrious, and sober, and a good cook.' But I never knew before that I was strong and deep. 'Deep' sounds so mysterious and crafty. I am not sure that I am pleased with the description. But you mustn't be so modest about yourself, Di. I think when you are tested you will come out all right. You are going to be a great artist for one thing. You are steady enough there, for you not



only have a true love for it, but lots of perseverance, which counts for so much."

"I am thinking very seriously of studying while I am over here if father and mother are willing," said Diana. "I don't know exactly what to do about it. I want to travel about and see as much as possible, and yet I should like to go to Paris and settle down to study in one of the great studios."

"Perhaps you can do that afterward," suggested Lois. "How interesting it would be to meet Sir Galahad again."

"More interesting than probable," rejoined Diana. "But the candles are burning very low and we really ought to go to bed. I am sorry this is our last night in *Anvers*, as they call it."

"What do you think the most interesting place here?" asked Lois. "Which shall you remember the longest?"

"The Cathedral and the picture galleries," replied Diana, promptly.

"The *Musée Plantin*," said Hope. "Think of all the books that have been printed there ever since Plantin set up his printing press there away back in 1549!"

"Of course that appeals to you!" laughed Diana. "You think of all the books you are going to write



in the years to come. I wonder how many you will really write, Hope, and if they will be —" she stopped abruptly.

"I suppose you were going to say, if they will be worth reading, but a tardy sense of politeness restrained you," observed Hope, as she blew out an expiring candle. "Time will prove. In the meantime Lois hasn't told us what she likes best in Antwerp."

Lois sat forward in her chair, her eyes shining, her golden hair forming a halo around her lovely face.

"I suppose you will think me perfectly dreadful," said she, "but I am going to be honest. I think the shops, especially the quaint little places where they sell old Dutch silver things, the most fascinating places in the world."

"Lois!"

"I knew you would be horrified," said she, calmly. And she was so pretty when she said it that Hope and Diana both kissed her and then looked at each other and laughed. It was so exactly like Lois.

The next morning came the excitement of paying their first hotel bill, feeing the servants, and taking their first railway journey on the Continent. Hope was in a state of much agitation as regarded the



fees. They had held numerous "councils of war" on the subject, and she acted upon the combined advice of the whole party, but it was difficult at first. Afterward experience taught her. The trouble was that Lois, accustomed to spending, suggested sums that were large, Mrs. Webster was unpractical, and Diana indifferent, while Hope was consumed with the desire to make their money go as far as possible, lest it should give out before their year of absence was over.

When they left their little hotel in Antwerp they were accompanied to the door of the omnibus that was to take them to the railway station by the whole staff of servants, headed by *Monsieur le propriétaire* himself, as well as the magnificent *portier*, all wreathed in smiles and carrying their bags and umbrellas with so much fervor that Hope felt instinctively that she had bestowed more than they had expected. As the omnibus rattled off through the narrow streets Lois remarked upon her unusually depressed expression.

"Are you so sorry to leave Antwerp, Hope?" she asked. "You look as if you were ready to cry."

"It is the fees," replied Hope, solemnly. "I have made some dreadful mistakes. The man that carried down the trunks ought to have had more and



the waiters not so much. Do you suppose I shall ever learn to do it just right?"

"Never mind!" said Lois, blithely. "We are leaving this set and hurrying on to another. Don't give these another thought."

"It will be easier in Brussels," said Hope, "as we are going to a *pension*. Surely they won't have such a quantity of men in a boarding-house standing about when we leave and almost putting their hands out to receive the money before we give it to them."

"I like the independence of a hotel," remarked Mrs. Webster, plaintively. "Freddy, dear, you will behave very nicely and be very good at the boarding-house we are going to, won't you, dear? We want all the people we meet to think that American boys are the nicest little boys in the world."

Freddy thrust his hands into his pockets, stretched out his legs as far as they would go, and fixed his gaze upon Hope, who returned it.

"You're the funniest girl," said he, without replying to his mother.

"Why?" asked Hope.

"'Cause you want to say something lots of times and you don't. You were just going to say something then about me and you didn't. You stopped yourself up. I don't know but what I like you the best



of the three. You're not as pretty as Diana or Lois, but you're more fun."

He had long since given up a more formal style of address, and called the three girls by their Christian names.

"I am not aware of having asked your opinion of me or my appearance," laughed Hope.

"No," said the boy, with his most cherubic expression.

"Freddy dear!" exclaimed his mother, but there was no time for further conversation, for they had reached the station, or *gare*. The odd little railway carriages, with their doors standing open upon the platform and marked according to their class, and in fact the whole routine of travelling, was so different from that to which they were accustomed at home, that the attention of all, including Freddy, was completely absorbed.

The journey to Brussels was not long, and was through a flat landscape totally unlike anything that they had ever seen. When they arrived and drove through the broad avenues of the Belgian capital, past parks and palaces, stately churches and vast public buildings, they realized that they had reached one of the handsomest and busiest cities of the Old World.



The *pension* to which they had been advised to go was kept by an Englishwoman, whose boarders were chiefly of her own nation. It was a large house on the corner of two streets, and the drawing-room, or *salon*, was filled to overflowing with furniture and bric-à-brac, while a cheerful coal fire burned in the grate, and bowls of flowers and potted plants gave a cheerful aspect to what would otherwise have been a dark room.

"How do you like it?" asked Hope, when they were upstairs, and the door closed. The three girls had a large room, with a smaller one adjoining. Mrs. Webster and Freddy were established on the floor below.

"For my part," said Diana, "I feel for the moment as free as a bird. Freddy is safely tucked away out of sight. That boy is getting to be almost too much for me."

"Oh, he isn't as bad as you make him out to be, Di," said Hope. "He has been quite angelic the last few days. It was the voyage that affected him, probably, and made him so obstreperous on board ship. He will be all right now."

"Don't be too sure," returned Diana, gloomily. "It is my opinion that he is only lying low, and may break out at any minute. He is a sleeping volcano."



Just when you think they are quite extinct they always break out, and he is by no means extinct."

"Then, according to your theory, he is not yet ready to break out," said Hope.

They all laughed and then were quiet for a moment, and in the silence they heard very plainly something that was said in the next room. There were folding doors between, and apparently the speaker on the other side was sitting very close to them.

"They are unmistakably Americans," said a low-pitched but very distinct voice, with an intonation that proved the lady to be English, "for they are so breezy. Americans are so awfully breezy, you know."

"And they are all very good-looking and very well dressed; I saw them arrive. Americans are always well dressed, for they have such an amount of money, you know. They can afford it. But their voices!"

"Oh, yes, their voices!" rejoined some one else, and there was a chorus of disapproval. And then a bell rang from below which summoned them to luncheon.

"We must look out for our voices," whispered Hope, when their suppressed laughter had subsided



somewhat. "I suppose it must be true that Americans have high-pitched voices, for it is always said of us, and that in the next room was attractive, wasn't it? But it was a sad voice. Breezy, are we? They will find Freddy decidedly breezy, I am afraid. They little know what is in store for them."

Everything was done with great propriety at Miss Jonson's *pension*, and with an elaborateness of style that was intended to make people imagine that they were invited guests, rather than boarders who were staying there at the well-defined rate of so many francs a day. They were all assembled in the *salon* when the Americans went downstairs, and were awaiting the coming of Miss Jonson. No one thought of going to the table until she was ready to take her place at the head of it. Hope looked from one to the other of the group of people, anxious to discover the owner of the attractive voice, but they were all staring so hard at the newcomers that she turned away and began to talk to her friends. A little later, when they were seated at the table, she heard the voice again.

It came from a very tall young woman. She was over six feet in height, and Hope had noticed when she came into the room that she was taller even



than she was herself. She was dressed in an aggressively masculine fashion, wearing a very high linen collar and a red hunting-waistcoat which did not seem particularly appropriate to the present occasion. She had a monocle which she occasionally placed in her eye, and through which she stared at the company. She looked bored, and she spoke very seldom. They learned afterward that her name was May Redwood. At first she was inclined to scorn all things American, but afterward she changed in this respect and became excellent friends with the girls, and especially with Hope.



## CHAPTER FOUR.

IT was nearly three weeks later and the Americans still lingered in Brussels. It had been their intention to stay there but a short time and then to move on to Munich for the remainder of the winter, but for various reasons their going had been delayed.

"I believe it will end in our staying here all winter," said Hope Conway, one afternoon. She and Diana were alone in their room and Hope stood at the window looking out into the street. It was raining hard, as it usually does in Brussels. The room was very dark, and Diana sat at the other window, trying to catch the last rays of daylight for her book.

"I never was in such a depressing place," continued Hope. "When we first got here I thought it was perfect, and if we had gone away at the end of a week, as we intended to do, I should always have considered Brussels an attractive, interesting place. The trip to Waterloo was delightful, and



filled me with a mad enthusiasm for history, and I have enjoyed being in a place that is mentioned in my dear 'Vanity Fair.' To think of our seeing the very house where the ball was given the night before the battle of Waterloo, the ball that Thackeray tells about, and then to go and see the battle-ground itself! It makes it all seem so real. And I had forgotten until to-day that the scene of Charlotte Brontë's 'Villette' is Brussels, and she was here herself, you know, as teacher in one of the schools. But, oh, this darkness! We only have actual daylight from nine until three, and then it is only an apology for the real thing. I felt this morning at the breakfast table as if I should burst into tears, it was so dark. Miss Jonson is so economical about gas."

"It isn't like you to get so depressed, Hope. You don't feel this way often, and it isn't always December, with short days and so much rain. You know when it was first suggested that we should stay longer you were rather glad to do it." Diana put aside her book and passed her hand over her eyes as she spoke.

"I know I was, but really, Di, I am getting quite worried about various things. We came abroad for a certain purpose, didn't we? You for art, I for



experience, Lois, I suppose, for general information. Whoever dreamed that we should be hampered in our flight by such tawdry and paltry considerations as new clothes?"

Hope had left the window and now drew her chair to the little open stove, where a small coal fire burned dimly.

"It is too provoking," she continued, as she poked the fire vigorously. "If we had Lois to ourselves she never would think of getting so many new things. It is all Mrs. Webster's influence. Lois is perfectly fascinated by her, and is willing to do anything that she suggests. Of course all the dress-makers and tailors are going to disappoint them, and keep us staying on here. They would be idiots if they didn't, for the longer we stay the more those two will order. This is the fifth time this week that Mrs. Webster and Lois have gone off for hours, and left me with the care of Freddy. They promised to be back by two o'clock, for they know I have an engagement with Miss Redwood. I am going to strike."

"Poor Hope!" said Diana. "It is a shame, and I don't wonder you are cross. I will look after Freddy the next time."

"No, I shall not allow that. You must get all you can at the Museum and the other picture gal-



leries. That is the most important thing for us to think of."

"I can make up for lost time when we get to Munich, and indeed I think it will be just as well for my eyes to rest a little. They have been troubling me a good deal lately. I don't know what can be the matter with them." She moved her eyelids rapidly as she spoke and again passed her hand over them.

"I have seen you do that very often," said Hope. "It is this horrid darkness that is trying them. You must be careful of them, Di. If I were you I wouldn't read. Just save those precious eyes for looking at things. I wish your eyes were as strong as mine or Lois's. And she doesn't care to use hers for looking at pictures! Queer, isn't it?"

"Yes. I wish that Lois would care more for the things that we care for. I hate to have her deteriorate."

"So should I if I thought she were doing so, but it isn't worth while to expect too much of her. We both know how dear she is. And what a fortunate thing it is that she has grown so fond of Mrs. Webster. As we are travelling together, it would be a pity if none of us cared to be with her, and to do the things sometimes that she likes best."



"That is true, and I suppose we mustn't be too exacting."

"But I trust we shall get away from here before Christmas," said Hope. "We have set our hearts on seeing a German Christmas, and I shall be awfully disappointed if we don't. I wonder what Freddy is doing now. I left him playing Halma with Miss Redwood. She is very good-natured, isn't she, in spite of her odd ways? She looks so exactly as if she had stepped out of *Punch*, so exaggeratedly masculine and so English in her long loose coat and her man's hat. When she puts that monocle into her eye I can scarcely keep from laughing outright. But I like her, although she never knows whether I am joking or in earnest, or rather she always thinks I am in earnest. She asked me to go with her this afternoon to have a cup of tea at the 'Mikado,' that tea-room that is kept by those English girls down on the *Rue Royale*. I wish she had asked you, too."

"I don't think she finds me as interesting as she does you," said Diana. "She rather likes your quick tongue, though she doesn't understand your jokes. I will look after Freddy until his mother comes home."

"You are a dear," said Hope.



At this moment there was a knock on the door, and upon opening it they found Miss Redwood.

"Are you ready, Miss Conway?" she asked, as she came in. "And won't you come with us, Miss Stuart? I should like awfully to have you. We are going to get a cup of tea at the 'Mikado,' you know."

"No, I thank you," said Diana. "I am tired, for I have been doing ever so much sight-seeing to-day, and as all the others are out I must look after Freddy."

"It seems to me you are all very good-natured," said Miss Redwood. "He is a jolly enough little chap, but I fancy it must be a bit boring to have him always about."

"I think you were very good-natured to play Halma with him."

"Oh, he's not half bad, and he plays rather well for such a little lad."

"What has become of him now?" asked Hope, as she hurried about the room, now pausing before the mirror to set her hat straight, now diving into trunks and boxes and drawers in a vain search for her gloves.

"He has gone to his room. He said he had something on hand to do. I forget what. He



looked sleepy and good. I guess he is all right, as you Americans would say."

"I fahncy he's not, as you English would say!" rejoined Hope. "Sleepy and good! A sure sign that he is planning something uncommonly wide-awake and bad. You had better keep a sharp eye on the little lad, Di. There, I am ready at last, Miss Redwood. Oh, my umbrella! It seems so extraordinary never to be able to go out without an umbrella. Good-by, Di. Don't try to read any more, even when the lamp comes, will you, dear?"

Diana, left to herself, drew an armchair close to the fire and gave herself up to memories of all that she had seen that morning. She forgot Freddy, or if she thought of him, she told herself that he was in his room and for once could be left to himself for a little while. She was tired and she closed her eyes, in which the greater part of her fatigue seemed to centre. Very soon she was fast asleep in the big chair.

Hope and Miss Redwood left the house, quite unconscious that a small person was watching them from an upper window. They walked quickly down the street in the direction of the shops. Their way was for a time through one of the magnificent boulevards of Brussels, an avenue of immense



breadth, and consisting really of three streets that run on parallel lines, with double rows of trees and wide paths for foot-passengers and horsemen. It was not now raining, but the streets were wet, and the myriad lights showed somewhat dimly through a fog that gave a touch of mystery to the great city. When the two girls reached the vast open space in the centre of the town, which is called the *Place Royale*, Hope paused for a moment.

"Do you mind stopping a minute?" said she. "Isn't it wonderful? Look at those long lines of lights stretching away in all directions through the mist! And look down *Montagne de la Cour!*"

She pointed to the narrow street which led down a steep hill, and then wound its way out of sight around the corners of quaint, foreign-looking buildings. It was lined with fascinating shop windows, all brilliantly lighted at that hour, for though it was but four o'clock it was as dark as night. Up and down this street walked crowds of people of all classes, well-dressed men and women, working people, idlers of all degrees, news-venders crying their papers, and foreigners from all parts of the world. The sidewalks being too narrow for more than two abreast, they walked in the middle of the





SHE POINTED TO A NARROW STREET WHICH LED  
DOWN A STEEP HILL.







street, scattering to right and left when huge omnibuses drawn by four horses, automobiles, and private carriages dashed along at a furious pace, their drivers uttering a peculiar whoop to warn the pedestrians that their safety depended entirely upon their own agility in getting out of the way.

The two girls, after watching the scene for a few minutes, went on to the tea-room.

"I am glad you could come with me," said Miss Redwood, when she had given the order. "I am always very thankful to get away from tea at the *pension*. To see huge Mrs. Brently, with her white hair and her absurdly pompous manner, sitting up behind the urn, pouring out the best cup of tea for herself and giving every one else a cup of hot water, is rather more than I can endure. She is quite the most irritating woman I have ever met, and why Miss Jonson allows her to make the tea I cannot imagine."

"I am so afraid that Freddy will do or say something to her," laughed Hope. "He makes her very uncomfortable as it is by staring at her across the table. She gets so cross that at times I fairly tremble."

"Cross! Rather! She has a terrible temper. I wish the little chap would do something to wake



us all up. I am so bored with existence in that boarding-house that I would gladly have something happen. However, you Americans are always amusing. One never knows quite what you will do or say next."

"Thank you!" said Hope, laughing. "I was not sure that you appreciated our powers of being amusing. We have occasionally said some rather good things that I thought you did not understand."

"Oh, it is not altogether what you say," rejoined Miss Redwood. "I confess that sometimes when you laugh among yourselves I am quite at a loss to know what the joke is. You laugh so easily, you know. But look, here come your friends, Mrs. Webster and that pretty Miss Putnam! Let us make room for them at our table."

"We have been having such a good time!" exclaimed Lois, joyously, as, the greetings over and their chocolate having been ordered, she pulled off her gloves. "The shops here are so amusing. The shopkeepers don't like it a bit if you look at things and then don't buy them. One woman called after us: '*Ces Anglaises sont toujours si désagréables!*'"

"What do you think of that, Miss Redwood? Fancy our being taken for Englishwomen! You



and Mrs. Brently, with your superiority to all things American, must find that hard to bear."

"Pray do not class me with Mrs. Brently!" said Miss Redwood. "And really, you know, I feel very different about Americans since you came to Brussels. You are all ladies, it is easy to see. What are you laughing at? Have I said anything funny? I did not intend to, I assure you."

"No, I know you didn't," said Hope, "and that is just the funniest part of the whole thing, and you do look so completely puzzled."

"I don't see why we are taken for English people," said Mrs. Webster, "but I suppose the shop people judge entirely by the language. They think, too, that both nations have plenty of money to spend, and they are so eager to sell. At one place we stopped to look in the window, which was full of exquisite lace, and three women actually came out on the sidewalk and begged us to come in. They told us that the entrance was free! It proved not to be free at all, for I couldn't get away without buying some."

"Mrs. Webster! More lace?"

"My dear Hope, I simply can't resist it! You know lace is one of my especial weaknesses. I sometimes actually wish that Freddy were a girl,



for then I should have more excuse for buying it. By the way, Hope dear, where is Freddy? I intended to get back before this, but I always feel so safe when I leave him with you. You are so dependable. It has added so much to my pleasure in the Brussels shops to feel that dear Freddy was safe with you."

"Has it really? You are kind to say so," rejoined Hope. Lois understood the sarcasm in her tone, but Mrs. Webster did not suspect it. "Miss Redwood has been playing Halma with him, and we left him with Diana. I don't know what he may not be doing by this time. Setting the house on fire, perhaps."

"Oh, my dear Hope! What a fright you have given me! Do let us hurry home. How can you suggest anything so dreadful?"

Half an hour later, when they left the tram in which they had ridden to within a block of the *pension*, Hope saw a small, strangely familiar figure hurrying along the rather dark street.

"Look!" said Miss Redwood, who was walking with her in front, while Mrs. Webster and Lois followed more slowly. "My word! I believe it is the little chap himself."

"It is!" exclaimed Hope. "He has been out



alone, a thing which he is never allowed to do. What will his mother say? He might have been kidnapped. She is always expecting it."

"Then she ought to watch him more carefully, or have a maid to look after him. It is quite too preposterous that she should depend upon you. Yes, he is going up the steps. It is he! Let us walk more slowly, and perhaps he will get in before we reach the door."

But a tell-tale street light shone directly down upon the small person waiting upon the steps for the door to be opened, and Mrs. Webster, moved by a sudden impulse to haste, passed the tall girls in front of her and saw him.

"Who is that at our door?" she asked. "It looks like — Hope! Lois! It is — it is Freddy! He has been out alone in this wicked foreign city! Hope, how could you leave him? I thought I could trust you to look after my boy. Freddy dear, where have you been?"

"Out for a stroll," replied Freddy, holding his hand over one of his pockets which bulged suspiciously.

"My precious child, how did you know your way? And where did you go?"

"Oh, I just went over to the *Chaussée d'Ixelles* and had a look at the shop windows."



"The *Chaussée d'Ixelles*! That dreadfully common street, so crowded with wicked-looking people! You know, Freddy dear, that mother never allows you to go out here alone."

"Well, you were all out, and I got tired of hanging around doing nothing, so I just went myself. I have studied the map, and I know my way around as well as anybody. It's no fun poking in this dark old house alone. I hate Europe, anyway. Wish I was home!"

They all went upstairs, Mrs. Webster agitated and reproachful, Freddy very obstinate, Lois doing her best to throw oil upon the troubled waters, while Hope was quite silent. She felt that Mrs. Webster was unjust to place all the responsibility for Freddy's actions upon her, and she knew that if she spoke, she would say something that afterward she might regret. She went to her room, anxious to hear from Diana how Freddy had escaped her. She opened the door with a sudden burst. The fire was nearly out, and there was no light. From the chair in front of the grate a figure rose slowly.

"How you startled me!" said Diana, in a drowsy voice; "I must have been asleep. I wonder what time it is, and what Freddy is doing?"

"You'd better wonder!" exclaimed Hope, wrathfully. "I left the dreadful child in your care, Diana!



I see that I can't trust anybody. He has been out by himself, and Mrs. Webster is perfectly furious about it. She is all upset, and I am getting all the blame. She says she left him with me and that it is my fault. I never came abroad to be a child's nurse. I have a good mind to go back by the next steamer. Do let us have a light!"

She struck match after match, in her agitation putting them out as fast as they were lighted. At last the lamp and several candles were burning, and the room had become so brilliant that Diana covered her eyes with an exclamation of pain, but Hope was too much excited to notice it.

"I am very sorry," said Diana, "but I was so tired, and my eyes ached so badly that I had to shut them for a while, and I suppose the darkness made me fall asleep. But if he is safely back, I don't see what difference it makes. If he had got lost, how much worse it would have been."

"Well, I wish you would go tell Mrs. Webster that! And no one knows what he may not have been doing while he was gone. I am willing to wager a good deal that we shall have cause to rue the day when we let him escape. There will be far-reaching consequences of some sort, you see if there are not!"



"What a raven you are, Hope!" said Lois, who had come into the room while she was speaking. "It isn't a bit like you to be always croaking disaster. Mrs. Webster feels much better about it now, for Freddy said he was sorry, and he has gone down to the salon to wait for dinner, as good as he can be. She doesn't understand, though, how he got out, and if you or Diana would go and explain it to her, I think it would be better."

"I will go as soon as I am dressed for dinner," said Diana. "It was all my fault, for Hope would not have gone out if I had not offered to look after him."

Half an hour later they were all assembled in the salon, waiting for Miss Jonson to take her place at the table in the next room. Diana had made her peace with Mrs. Webster, and she, with the bright smile and the pretty graciousness of manner which made every one like her in spite of her provoking traits, went to Hope the moment that she came downstairs.

"I am so sorry, Hope dear, that I was so cross," she said sweetly. "You will forgive me, I know. Diana tells me that it was all her fault, and she is so full of remorse that I have forgiven her. You know that precious child is very dear to me.



He is all I have! And the thought of his being lost in this great, wicked Brussels was almost too much for me. My heart is still beating, I assure you. It gave me such a fright!"

"I am very sorry, Mrs. Webster. But it is better than if your heart had stopped beating, isn't it?" observed Hope. "Where is Freddy now?"

"Oh, he has gone into the dining room, and is sitting in his place as good as gold. He asked me if he might. I know it isn't very good manners for him to go in before the others, but just this once I allowed him to do it — and, after all, this formality at a boarding-house seems very unnecessary."

Presently they were all seated at the table. Mrs. Webster and Lois were on one side of it with Freddy between them, while Hope and Diana had places almost directly opposite. Mrs. Brently, the large English lady, sat next to Diana and was therefore opposite to Freddy, and was usually the victim of his most prolonged and steady stare. To-night he was especially good, however, and ate his soup slowly and decorously, with never a glance across the table.

The soup plates had been removed and the fish had been served, when Mrs. Brently gave a loud exclamation of horror. Everybody looked at her



and saw to their amazement that her plate was moving up and down in a very extraordinary manner. Mrs. Brently put down her fork and gazed helplessly about. Her plate was now fairly jumping, the knife and fork dancing with a merry clatter. Then all became quiet.

"What is it?" gasped Mrs. Brently, growing quite purple in the face. "Did you see it? I am afraid to touch it."

"Some one must have been kicking the table," said Miss Jonson, glancing severely at Freddy, who was not a favorite of hers.

Hope also looked at him, but could discover nothing. He seemed to be as much interested in the dancing plate as were the other people at the table, but that was all. Mrs. Brently's agitation being somewhat allayed, she returned to her fish, which was particularly good to-night, and of a kind to which she was especially partial. After all, perhaps it had been owing to a sudden jarring of the table, though why her plate alone had suffered she could not understand.

And then in a moment it began again! Mrs. Brently screamed and pushed back her chair.

"It is not a kick!" she cried. "It is something alive! It is a mouse under my plate!"



No words can describe the excitement which ensued. Diana tried to soothe Mrs. Brently, who was now in hysterics; Mrs. Webster turned very white; all the boarders rose from their chairs, except Freddy, who sat still and stared, with round eyes and solemn face.

"Too innocent by far," thought Hope. She picked up the lively plate which no one had thought of doing, and placed her hand upon a small object that was beneath the table-cloth. For a moment she herself fancied that it might be a mouse, and even her stout spirit quailed at the thought of touching a live mouse. Then she rallied her courage, turned back the table-cloth, and disclosed to view a small object made of rubber and now perfectly flat. It was attached to a long tube, also of rubber, which seemed to extend under the table.

"Hope!" exclaimed Freddy, in angry tones, "I think you are real mean! You have gone and spoiled everything! I was going to have lots more fun with it!"

"I knew you were at the bottom of it, you dreadful child!" cried Hope, while every one else turned to him in shocked surprise. "Where did you get it, and what is it?"



“ I got it on the *Chaussée d’Ixelles*,” said Freddy. “ I saw it there the other day when I was with you, and I went and got it this afternoon. I was going to have some fun in this stupid old place. It was working splendidly, and now you have gone and spoiled everything, Hope! All you have to do is to squeeze one end, like this, and the other swells up and joggles things up and down. They showed me at the shop how to do it. There’s a man there who speaks English, and he told me it was an American invention. I thought it would be just the thing to frighten Mrs. Brently with when she was eating her fish. She is so awfully fond of her fish, you know.”

By this time Mrs. Brently’s hysterics had become so violent that she had to be led away from the room, and restoratives were administered in Miss Jonson’s office. Mrs. Webster, very pale, and leaning upon Lois with one hand while she grasped Freddy with the other, also retired from the scene. The other boarders resumed their seats, and the servants, when they had recovered somewhat from the excitement, proceeded to serve dinner. Hope and Diana ate theirs in extreme embarrassment, wishing that the ground might open and swallow them up. The silence had become very awkward, when suddenly



it was broken by Miss Redwood, who began to laugh.

“It is quite too funny!” she exclaimed. “You Americans give me no end of entertainment. The little chap said it was an American toy! Pray tell me, do you often amuse yourselves in this way at dinner?”



## CHAPTER FIVE.

HOPE'S wishes for a German Christmas were not destined to be fulfilled. Freddy's prank at the dinner table had such an effect upon his mother that she was ill for two weeks, with a doctor in attendance, which made it impossible for them to leave Brussels, and in order to keep their rooms longer they were obliged to engage them until the first of January. The three girls were somewhat dismayed by this information, which was given to them by Miss Jonson one morning soon after breakfast.

"Let us go out and talk it over," said Hope. "The sun is actually shining this morning, and we would better make the most of it."

"By all means," agreed Diana. "Let us go out to the *Bois*, where we can breathe freely and say what we like without any danger of being overheard in the next room."

"Can we all leave Mrs. Webster?" asked Lois, somewhat doubtfully. "I want to go to walk, but



it seems unkind to leave her alone, and then there is Freddy. I suppose we ought to take him with us."

"If he goes, I shall stay at home," said Hope. "How can we talk if he is with us? And things must be settled." She stopped abruptly, and going to the window she drummed impatiently upon the window-pane. "I am getting so cross," she said to herself. "I don't know whether it is the Websters or the weather, but I must be careful. I shall be too disagreeable to live with if I don't take care."

"I think we can leave them this once," said Diana; "Mrs. Webster is better to-day, and Freddy is playing with the little English boy who came last night. He is only to be here a day, unfortunately. We really must talk over things. There is something else I want to consult you about."

"I knew you had something on your mind, Di," said Hope; "I have thought so for some time. Do let us hurry out before the sun disappears again."

"Suppose we go in the tram to the *Bois*," suggested Lois, "so as to be able to take a long walk out there."

"First or second class tram?" asked Hope, as she investigated the contents of her purse.



“Second, by all means,” replied Diana. “The only difference is velvet cushions.”

“And as they change the cushions at the end of the route into the other compartment, the distinction is really too absurd. The fine velvet cushions go into the part where the common people have been, and then back again for the rich ones on the next trip. And the curtains at the windows are so very funny—curtains in a street car! I shall never get used to foreign ideas. Fancy in America a car filled with men all seated, while the platforms are crowded with women standing! It seems an excellent idea when you happen to be one of those who have a seat that they don’t allow passengers to stand inside, but it is not so nice when you chance to be one of those who are standing.”

They were soon ready, and having explained to Mrs. Webster that they would not leave her long, and having provided her with books and asked the maid to look in upon her occasionally, they left the house, and presently were in the tram, speeding out over the broad and beautiful Avenue Louise to the *Bois*. Upon reaching the great Park they took a wide path through the woods. The richly colored trunks of the trees, kept green by the perpetual dampness of the weather, the dead leaves on the



ground, the reddish soil of the path, the bright blue sky and the golden sunshine, all combined to make a vivid picture. Occasionally a horseman rode through the woods, sometimes an officer in bright scarlet, his uniform glinting showily among the trees. Here and there an old woman in a short bright petticoat and a gay-colored shawl could be seen gathering fagots for her scanty fire.

It was all so picturesque that for a time the girls forgot their anxieties and could think of nothing but the scene that lay about them. They walked arm in arm, as was their habit when walking in the country at home. Diana in the middle, with little Lois on one side of her and tall Hope on the other, and they stopped now and then to gaze and exclaim with delight. They met no one walking at that hour in the morning, and they could talk with perfect freedom.

"We are losing time," said Lois, presently. "We came out here to discuss things, you know."

"So we did," returned Diana; "but it is so much more delightful to look than to discuss. Hope's face was getting quite smoothed out. It has been dreadfully puckered up lately, Hope."

"Has it? I am sorry. It is horrid to have to look at a puckered-up face. But really, girls, I



have been worried. I feel as if we had been wasting time by staying so long in Brussels."

"I don't see how it can be helped," said Lois. "Mrs. Webster is really not equal to a journey yet. I am very thankful that we can keep the rooms if we want to. I was afraid Miss Jonson would turn us all out after that affair of Freddy's."

"She would have done so if she could," said Diana, "but she can't afford to have all our empty rooms on her hands. She is getting even with us by insisting that we shall keep them now until January."

Hope laughed. "I should think she would far rather have us go. She had hard work to pacify Mrs. Brently, and all the boarders except Miss Redwood were in a state of intense indignation. No wonder! And what dreadful things they will always say about American children! But now, about leaving here. I do want to get to Munich so much. I think it will be much cheaper there, and, Di, I think you ought to have the benefit of the art museums."

"I may as well tell you," said Di, very quietly, "that I don't believe I am going to be able to look at pictures very constantly."

"Di, what do you mean?" exclaimed her two friends. "Are your eyes worse?"



"Yes, they have been a good deal worse lately. I shall have to rest them."

"My dearest Di!" cried Hope; "and you have scarcely said a word about it! I thought you hadn't seemed as much interested lately in going to look at things, but I never dreamed they were as bad as that. You ought to go to an oculist."

"I don't want to, here in Brussels. I don't like the Belgian men, and I have asked some of the English people, and they tell me there is no English oculist here. They advised me to wait until we get to Germany, and they suggested something that I want to consult you about. I can't bear to ask you to change the plans, and I know, Hope, that you are so anxious to get to Munich, but —"

"But what?" asked Hope, impatiently, as Diana paused. "As if I could possibly mind giving up Munich, or anything else, if it is going to do you any good!"

"They tell me there are several very fine German oculists at Wiesbaden, the best in the world, and I thought if you would not mind stopping there on our way, we could go on to Munich later. I have looked it up, and I found that Wiesbaden is right on the direct route to Munich. What do you think of the plan, girls? Should you mind very much?"



"Of course we shouldn't!" said both together.

"But I think we ought to go right away," added Hope; "we ought not to lose a minute."

"A few weeks won't make any difference," said Diana, "and I must write home about it. You know I shall have to use more money. That is the worst part of it all. It is going to take so much money to put myself under the care of a specialist."

"We can save it later," said Hope, promptly. "We can give up some of the weeks that we planned to spend in Paris. Of course your eyes must be the first consideration. Why, Di, what will you do if you can't paint?"

She stopped, struck by the expression of Diana's face.

"Don't speak of that," said Diana, in a low, strained voice. "I dare not even think of it."

They walked on in silence for a few minutes. Lois was the first to break it.

"You must not worry about the money, Di. You know I can have all I want, and there is no reason why I shouldn't help you, for I have so much more than either of you. You must let me give it to you."

"I couldn't, Lois. You are a dear to offer it to me, but I couldn't take it."



"Then let me lend it," persisted Lois. "We are all like sisters, and I don't see why you can't let me help you as if I were really your sister."

"But you are not, you see. Perhaps I will borrow some — no, I won't do it either, for I don't think father would like me to. I will take it out of what I have for the year in Europe, and go home sooner if necessary. If I can't use my eyes, it will scarcely be worth while for me to stay."

"Oh, Di!"

And then they were all very quiet again. Intimate as these three girls had been for many years, neither Hope nor Lois suspected the suffering, both mental and physical, that Diana had experienced during the last few weeks. Her eyes had given her great pain, although their appearance showed but little sign of any trouble, and the fear that there might be something really serious the matter filled her with anxious foreboding. Of all "the ills that flesh is heir to" there is perhaps not one that is more depressing to the spirits than that which affects the sight, for when one is unable to use the eyes there is little to divert the mind.

In Diana's case it seemed unusually hard, for her sole purpose in coming abroad had been to prepare for her future work, and if that was to be taken



from her, not only would the money have been spent in vain, but the disappointment would be very great. It was only natural that she took the darkest view possible of the situation. The incessant rain and gloomy weather were discouraging at the best of times, and doubly so when she was confronted by a great anxiety and possible calamity. Then, too, she was far away from home and family, and the thought of consulting a foreign physician was most repugnant to her. All together the outlook was not cheerful, and it had been difficult at times to wear a brave face. It would have been better if she had told her friends before and had talked the matter over with them, but she had hesitated to distress them. Now, however, that circumstances had made it necessary, she was glad enough to unburden her mind.

They decided to go to Wiesbaden and to stay there as long as it might be necessary. Mrs. Webster agreed to the new plans most willingly.

"I have always wanted to go to one of those German watering places," said she. The girls had returned from their walk and had stopped in her room. "It will be most interesting to drink the waters, and will do me ever so much good. I am so sorry about our poor, dear Diana's eyes, but



no doubt the German doctor will help her, and we shall all have a very good time there. I have been dreading Munich, for they tell me it is a cold, disagreeable place, so perhaps it will turn out well. I am sure I shall be much better for a course of the waters. Perhaps Freddy will find some playmates there. It is hard for the dear boy to be only with older people."

Hope, upon hearing this speech, abruptly left the room. She ran upstairs as fast as she could go, in her flight almost knocking down Miss Redwood, who stood at the top of the stairs.

"You come up like one of your American cyclones," said the English girl. "What idea has seized you now, and where are you running to?"

"I am running away from the idea," replied Hope, "and it is this: there are some people who were born with the belief that the world and all the inhabitants thereof were created solely for them. That is one idea. This is another: if you happen to have a temper, run! Discretion is the better part of valor. Therefore, run before you say anything. Don't you agree with me?"

"Rather," said Miss Redwood. It was an expression that she found useful upon every occasion.



The party started on the second day of January. They drove across Brussels in a dense fog, which continued until they had left the city many miles behind them. The guide-book told them that they were passing through a beautiful country, but for several hours they could see nothing. Hope's spirits rose, however, when she remembered that they were actually on their way to something different. She hoped that the change would be good for Diana in every way, and that a more invigorating climate, combined with the advice of a good oculist, would be of great benefit to her. She determined to banish anxiety from her mind as much as possible and to do what she could to enliven the party, each one of whom looked tired and depressed this gloomy morning. They had the railway carriage to themselves the greater part of the way, and she played "paper and pencil games" with Freddy, and told funny stories until they were all laughing, and merrier than would have been thought possible when they left Brussels. At Herbesthal they crossed the frontier and found themselves on Prussian soil.

"I feel better already," said Hope, when they had returned to the train after the Custom House formalities were over. "I like the Germans. They



are so big and fair-haired, and they are so much more patient with your ignorance than the Belgians are. I feel, too, as if we were going to save some money here, and that has a wonderfully cheering effect. I am so glad you are all willing to go to that cheap place in Cologne for the two nights. They have a *Christliches Hospiz*, as they are called, in every German city, and I was told before we left home that they are always respectable and clean, and very much nicer for ladies to go to alone than a hotel. They are something like a Young Women's Christian Association place."

"I like a hotel," said Mrs. Webster, plaintively. "They are more independent. However, I am perfectly willing to save a little money. My expenses in Brussels, what with clothes and doctor's bills, were very heavy."

"I wonder how we shall get along with the language," said Lois. "It is fortunate that we can speak a little."

"I am afraid it will not pass muster as well as our French," said Diana; "but I believe that many of the Germans speak English, and when they do they are always anxious to air it, no matter how little they may know."

"Oh, we can say a few necessary things in Ger-



man," said Hope; "for instance, '*Wo ist der Zug?*' a most important question when travelling, and then we have the phrase book, you know. That will always help us out. I will now turn to the part 'concerning lodgings,' which is a most important question for us now. I can ask in four languages and most politely: 'I understand, sir, that you have apartments to let. Will you allow me to see them?' Isn't that very polite?"

"And when the landlord answers with equal politeness and elaborate language, what are you going to do? Unfortunately the phrase book doesn't give the reply."

"Well, I shall just take it for granted that he said something satisfactory, and I shall then continue" — she paused and ran her eyes rapidly down the page — "'How often do you change the sheets?' And here is the answer to that, 'Every fortnight, and your towel will be changed once a week.' Dear me! Do you suppose that is true? Only one towel a week?"

"I always heard that Germans are queer about their washing," said Mrs. Webster, anxiously. "My dear girls, do you think we did right to come?"

"Oh, yes, indeed! The phrase book may exaggerate. But look! the fog has lifted, or we have



left it behind. Isn't that view beautiful?" And they forgot all such commonplace things as sheets and towels in looking at the Prussian landscape.

They arrived at Cologne shortly after four o'clock. It was almost dark, but as they approached the city they could see the spires of the Cathedral, and when they left the train they found that the station was close to it. However, they did not then stop to admire its beauty, but hurried along the street to the *Christliches Hospiz*. Hope and Lois had studied the map of Cologne, and knew exactly how to reach there. It seemed to be but a short distance, and they had decided to walk, carrying their bags, for they declared that they would all feel better for the exercise after the day spent in the train. But distance as depicted on a map is sometimes deceptive, and as they walked on and on, with no sign of a *Christliches Hospiz* within sight, Mrs. Webster's unwonted energy gave out.

"I can't go another step," said she, standing still and looking very helpless, "my dear girls! You are all so strong you don't in the least realize what it is to be an invalid. My bag is *so* heavy!"

"It is because you have all those silver toilet articles in it," said Hope. "Let me carry it; and wouldn't you like to take my arm?"



There was a redistribution of luggage, and then they all walked on again, Mrs. Webster finding great comfort in the support of Hope's young arm.

"You are *so* dependable, Hope dear, as I have maintained ever since I have known you," she said sweetly. "I should like to have you with me always. I feel that I can lean upon you with all my weight—and I am a woman who needs some one to lean upon. Some of us do, and some do not, you know. It is all a matter of temperament."

The twilight hid Hope's face from sight, but her two friends could well imagine its whimsical expression.

At last they reached a tall, dark-looking house with a steep flight of steps. Over the door was the welcome sign: "*Christliches Hospiz.*" Hope dropped Mrs. Webster's arm and ran briskly up the steps. Within the door, in a dark, narrow entry, stood two men who were talking busily, while in the background a third man, on a ladder, was engaged in painting the wall.

"*Sprechen Sie Englisch?*" demanded Hope.

"*Nein ! Nein !*" was the reply.

"*Können wir drei Zimmer haben?*"

"*Ja ! Ja !*" said the man, looking somewhat surprised.



"*Sehr wohlfeil!*" added Hope, emphatically. She had taken pains to learn that phrase by heart for the phrase book had told her that it meant "very cheap."

"*Ja! Ja!*" said the man again, and he led them up three very unsteady flights of stairs, to the top of the house. He named his price, which seemed reasonable even to economical Hope, and then, having poured forth a torrent of guttural sounds to which the study of the phrase book had given no clew, he departed.

"What a peculiar language German is!" said Lois. "I thought I knew a little in America, but it sounds so different in its own country. What was he saying, Hope?"

"I haven't the remotest idea, but he looks honest. Well, what do you think of it here?"

"I think it is absolutely impossible," said a voice from the sofa. It was Mrs. Webster's, and she held a handkerchief to her eyes. "The room is like a vault, it is so cold. And the darkness! The Brussels rooms were brilliant compared to this! And the furniture! Where did you ever hear of such a place as this, Hope? Those men looked astonished to see us here."

"Yes, they did, I must confess," said Diana.



"Let us light the candles and see how it is then," said Hope, valiantly.

In a few moments three little candle flames glimmered through the darkness.

"It's awful!" said Freddy. "Let's go away."

"Oh, by all means," added his mother.

"It is pretty bad," said Diana and Lois.

"But how can we get away?" asked Hope, quite distracted with this unfortunate turn of affairs. "We have engaged the rooms, and perhaps we should be made to pay for them."

"Oh, no, I am sure we shouldn't, and even if we should, I would rather pay for them all than stay here," said Mrs. Webster. "Do look in the Baedeker, or your address book, Hope, and see if there is not a good hotel for us to go to."

"Of course there are plenty of hotels," said Hope, reluctantly obeying, "but we really ought to try to put up with a few discomforts, I think, for the sake of saving some money."

"Hope dear," said Diana, quietly, "the rooms are so cold that it really wouldn't be safe for us to stay in them. You know the change in the weather is very great, and it wouldn't save anything if we were to take cold and be ill here."

A word from Diana usually had the effect of



quieting Hope's economical scruples, so she studied her Baedeker, and presently announced that the Continental Hotel was said to be reasonable, and good, and that it was not far from the Cathedral.

"It is exactly where we have just come from," said she. "We have got to walk back over the same route. If you all think alike, of course I must agree, but do you really think it is impossible to stay here?"

"Impossible!" they replied, with one voice, and, seizing their luggage, they started for the stairs. Arrived at the street floor, after a rapid and somewhat perilous descent (Hope's heel caught at the top of one flight and she narrowly escaped falling headlong), they looked for the men whom they had seen upon their arrival. The two proprietors had disappeared and only the painter remained. Hope approached him.

"*Wo ist der Mann?*" she asked.

He received her question in stony silence, and continued to paint. Hope looked helplessly at her friends.

"What shall we do?"

"Let us run!" said Diana.

"They might catch us and put us in prison," suggested Lois.



"A German prison!" cried Mrs. Webster. "It would be something very dreadful."

"I don't want to go to prison," wailed Freddy.

"It couldn't be any worse than this," said Hope, now as eager to depart as any of them. Then her eyes fell upon a door marked "*Kuch.*" "I think that means 'kitchen,' but I am not sure. Every German word I ever knew seems to have left me."

She knocked boldly on the door, and it was opened immediately by a woman.

"*Wir gehen,*" said Hope.

The woman, whose face was kind, nodded acquiescence, and then asked something which they did not understand. She then made signs of scrubbing her face, and then she rubbed her hands vigorously, as if applying unlimited soap and water.

"Have we bathed?" cried Hope. "*Nein! nein! Wir haben nicht* bathed!"

"*Guten Abend!*" said the woman. They were free!

They hurried out the door and up the street, trembling even yet lest the two men who had received them should return and discover their flight. At intervals they were obliged to stop, setting their luggage on the ground to rest their weary arms, and actually looking back to see if the men



were in pursuit, but at last they reached the safe haven of the Hotel Continental. There, electric lights, an elevator, and steam-heated rooms, all at a very moderate price, to say nothing of English-speaking landlord and waiters, quite repaid them for their fatigue.

"I told you so!" said Mrs. Webster, looking at Hope with a mixture of triumph and reproach in her glance; "there is nothing like a hotel. I have always said so, and I always shall."

And Hope was so well pleased herself with their new surroundings that she agreed with her most amiably; and although each one of them found upon investigation that she was decorated with splashes of white paint from the walls of the *Christliches Hospiz*, they all bore it with equanimity, and said gayly to one another: "Never mind! All's well that ends well."



## CHAPTER SIX.

THE day spent in Cologne was so delightful, so unmarred by any drawback to their enjoyment, that it remained in the girls' memory always as one of the "red-letter days" of their European trip. The air was cold and invigorating, and the sun shone gloriously upon the old city which had seen the rising and setting of so many suns since it was founded by the Romans away back in the year 38 B.C.

Hope, Lois, and Diana were indefatigable, and even Mrs. Webster shared their energy and enthusiasm, while Freddy, always interested in new scenes, was no hindrance to their pleasure. The wonderful Cathedral filled them with awed delight, and as the girls gazed upon its stately towers and portals, its magnificent stained glass and exquisite detail of workmanship, they felt that surely there could not be a more beautiful Gothic building in the world.

There were other churches, too, to look at and explore, as well as the Museum with its pictures,



and the thousand things of interest in the streets. This was their first view of a German city, and the contrast to Brussels was very marked. Not the least fascinating sight to Hope was the bridge over the Rhine. The last time she went to it was by moonlight, and Diana was with her. The lights of the city gleaming far and near, close at hand the Cathedral, the dark waters of the Rhine, and above all the moon shining down upon them, — that same moon that had shed its light upon the ancient river during all these long centuries, — made a scene of indescribable and mystic beauty which they never forgot.

“Even though I can never do anything with my eyes again,” said Diana, solemnly, “even—even, Hope, if I have to give up my work, I shall have this memory.”

“Di! You unable to paint! You, whose eyes have always seen so much that is beautiful, and who appreciate beauty more than any of us! It cannot be that you must give it all up! I can’t have it so.” Hope turned away in an agony of rebellion. “I would rather have had it come to me. My eyes are of no account, I don’t see things as you do.”

“But your books, dear,” said Diana, as she slipped her hand through Hope’s arm, “the books that you are going to write. They will be of more



use, perhaps, than the pictures that I was going to paint, so my eyes must be taken and yours left. I don't think that I am really going to lose my sight, but I am sure there is some serious trouble."

"Oh, we don't know," said Hope, striving to speak cheerfully though her own eyes were full of tears; "you may be—you are going to be—completely cured in Wiesbaden."

The following day they left Cologne, and took the journey up the Rhine to Wiesbaden. It was another clear day, but very cold, and when the travellers were seated in the compartment of a railway carriage, which again they had the good fortune to have to themselves, they found to their dismay that the windows were thickly coated with ice. It was as impossible to see through them as though they had been draped with heavy curtains.

"What shall we do?" cried Mrs. Webster. "Can't we call the conductor and ask him to—"

"Melt the frost?" put in Hope. "We couldn't say it in German, for it is a predicament not provided for in the phrase book. And he isn't a conductor, he's a guard." She was scraping the window-pane vigorously as she spoke. "There!" she continued; "I have made a little hole just big enough for one eye to peer through. If we all set



to work and keep at it we shall be able to see something."

It was necessary to "keep at it," for it froze up immediately if they relaxed their vigilance for an instant, but by dint of hard work they preserved the clear spaces, and later, when the sun's rays became stronger, it was less difficult. The railway runs close to the river's bank, and as they journeyed, Hope, guide-book in hand, told them as quickly as possible the legends attached to the ruined castles and the old towns near which they passed.

They saw the "Lurlei," the massive rocks in the middle of the river where in ancient times the beautiful golden-haired fairy was supposed to dwell who enticed fishermen and sailors to their destruction in the rapids at the foot of the precipice. Who does not know Heine's ballad of "The Lorelei"? And then they were passing the famous "Mouse-tower" which, built on a rock, also in the middle of the Rhine, was said to be the refuge of the cruel Archbishop Hatto, who, having burned up the poor people like mice in a barn, during a famine, was himself attacked by mice, which followed him to this tower and devoured him. Nowadays, alas! the stern historian picks flaws in all of our old legends, and disturbs the



fanciful pictures which have descended to us through the centuries from a less practical age, but when we are travelling up the Rhine we can afford to cast aside the shackles of exact prose and give ourselves up to the delights of poetry and imagination.

They arrived at Wiesbaden early in the afternoon, and by supper-time that night they were established in an Anglo-German *pension*. It was not "the season" at Wiesbaden, and although there are always many visitors in the place from all parts of the world, it was not as difficult to find lodgings as it would have been in May.

"I shall never get used to dining in the middle of the day," said Mrs. Webster, "but still I suppose it is just as well to conform to the customs of the country."

They had come upstairs from supper on the first evening and were sitting in the girls' large room.

"Particularly as we should have to starve if we didn't," laughed Hope. "So that is a German stove," she continued meditatively, gazing at a colossal object of dark green that reared its lofty height on one side of the room. "All my life I have heard of German stoves, and now here is one at last. It looks like a cathedral at least."



"It looks more like a monument in a cemetery," said Mrs. Webster, mournfully. "I know if I wake up in the night I shall think it is one."

"There is a tiny fire in the lower part," said Lois, investigating it, "and that heats the thing all the way up. Isn't it extraordinary?"

"What is that noise?" asked Mrs. Webster.

They all stopped talking for an instant and listened. In the next room there had arisen a confused chattering of voices, so shrill and loud that the noise penetrated the heavy curtain which hung over the door between.

"It must be the Russian lady," said Diana. "Did you see her at the other end of the table?"

"Yes. The woman with the thin face and frowsy hair and those piercing black eyes," said Hope. "She is so foreign-looking, and so excitable."

"That little girl is hers," said Lois. "She looks like a model of propriety. She speaks four languages."

"Whew!" whistled Freddy. "What are they?"

"French, German, English, and Russian."

"She must be a terror," said Freddy. "I say, mother, I wish there were some boys here. I wish you wouldn't always go to places where there are nothing but girls."



“Freddy dear, it is too bad ! Perhaps we shall get to know some boys here in Wiesbaden. It is hard for you, dear ! Perhaps one of the girls will play a game with you, dearest, or I will. We will draw lots.”

The girls laughed, and the slips were arranged. As usual Hope drew the longest, and sat down to a game of Lotto, which game she particularly disliked.

The next morning early they all started forth to view the town. That portion of it in which the Villa Rosa was situated (which was the name of their *pension*) was not unlike one of their own suburban towns at home, the houses standing apart from one another and some of them having a bit of land about them. A short walk down a steep hill brought them to the *Taunus Strasse*, a wide street with good shops, which in turn ran into the *Wilhelm Strasse*, the chief street of Wiesbaden.

“That must be the Kurhaus,” said Lois, pointing out in the distance a large building which stood in a park far back from the street. “That is where every one goes to read the papers and listen to the music. They have two concerts a day, and the nice English lady who was taking her tea this morning when we had our coffee said that every one goes there. You subscribe so much and that entitles you to everything. What do you think of our doing it?”



"By all means," said Mrs. Webster.

Hope hesitated. "Suppose we wait and see how long we shall probably stay here," said she, with a glance at Diana.

"I suppose that would be wiser," said Diana. "After I have been to the oculist to-day we can tell."

She spoke quietly, but she was very nervous. So much depended upon this visit to the doctor. It had been decided among the girls that she should ask Mrs. Webster to go with her. This arrangement made it still harder for Diana, for she would have preferred to have either Hope or Lois, but they agreed that it would be more proper for her to go with Mrs. Webster, and at eleven o'clock the visit was to be paid.

They were all standing quite still on the sidewalk of the *Wilhelm Strasse* when Freddy, who had been gazing at the wonders displayed in a shop window and then as aimlessly glancing up and down the street, suddenly gave an exclamation of surprise and delight. Without stopping to explain, he dashed across the broad avenue, and entering the Kurhaus grounds, ran at full speed toward the building.

"What is it?" cried Mrs. Webster. "Girls, he is running away! Please, please go after him!"

Hope and Lois ran, while Diana and Mrs. Web-



ster followed more slowly. "I am trembling so I can scarcely move," said his mother. "Do let us sit down for a moment — but there is no place to sit, is there? And besides, we must follow Freddy."

In the meantime the others, in quick pursuit, saw that the boy had stopped and was talking with some one.

"Who can it be?" asked Lois as they halted. "Was there ever such a boy?"

"It is some one who looks oddly familiar," said Hope. By this time Freddy and the stranger had turned and were walking quickly toward them. "Why, Lois, it is Reginald Manning!"

"Of all the lucky things!" exclaimed Reginald, hurrying toward them with outstretched hands; "I never was so glad to see anybody in my life! We thought you were in Munich by this time."

"And we thought you were in Paris," said the two girls, while Freddy danced about them, hopping first on one foot and then on the other, to give expression to his joy.

"My, but I'm glad you're here!" he cried. "Nothing but girls, girls, girls, everywhere!" Then he tore back to tell his mother of his discovery. "You never would have seen him if it hadn't been for me!" he declared triumphantly. "I saw him, and I



just cut and run. In another minute he would have been gone." And Mrs. Webster was so glad to find that the Mannings were in Wiesbaden that she soon recovered from the effects of Freddy's flight.

It seemed that neither Mrs. Manning nor Reginald had been particularly well in Paris, and Mrs. Manning had been advised to try a course of the waters at Wiesbaden for the neuralgia from which she was a constant sufferer. They had been there for about two weeks, and already she was better. Reginald told all this as quickly as possible.

"It is too cold for you to stand," said he. "Mother is coming to the Kurhaus later, so can't you come in there? Have you subscribed yet?"

"We only got here yesterday," said Hope, "and we don't yet know how long we are going to stay. It depends on—circumstances." She abruptly changed the ending of her sentence.

"It depends on my eyes," said Diana. "I have been having trouble with them, and we came here for me to see an oculist. The others have had to change all their plans on my account. Mrs. Webster and I are going to his office now. Couldn't Hope and Lois go see your mother while we are there?"

Reginald's expressive face showed his concern



and sympathy, but he had tact enough not to ask any questions then. He turned the subject by suggesting that they should all walk together as far as the doctor's house and perhaps meet his mother on her way to the Kurhaus. There was much to talk about in their varied experiences since they had parted on the steamer at Antwerp, and they walked through the park in a bunch, all talking and laughing. People of every nation turned to look at them. "*Amerikanerinen!*" said the stout Germans, stolidly. "*Les Américaines!*" said a Frenchman, with an inimitable gesture. "American!" said an Englishman. "They are always talking."

Hope felt an indescribable lightening of her heart. With Mrs. Manning within reach she knew that she had some one upon whose sound advice she could rely if matters turned out badly with Diana. Her anxiety about her friend was very great, and Mrs. Webster was but a feeble reed to lean upon, although Hope had grown fond of her. There was a charm about her in spite of her undeniable selfishness. Mrs. Manning was so motherly, so wise and tactful, that the girls felt instinctively that they could appeal to her in any difficulty that might arise, and that her counsel could always be trusted.



They left Mrs. Webster and Diana at the door of the oculist, and as it closed behind them Hope turned away with an exclamation of impatience.

"It does seem dreadful that this had to be," said she. "Think of our coming abroad with all these plans for self-improvement, Diana thinking of nothing but to work in the end. It isn't as if we had come only for pleasure. Other people come for that alone, and all goes smoothly from beginning to end. They have plenty of money, see everything, go home, and come again whenever they want to. This is probably the only trip that Diana will have over here for years, if she is ever able to come again; and look at her! Think of her! All the pain she has had almost ever since she got here, and this terrible anxiety."

"Tell me about it," said Reginald. "I didn't like to ask while Miss Stuart was with us."

"Oh, don't talk about that!" exclaimed Freddy, who was skipping along beside him. "Now that a feller's come, do let a feller have some fun."

"You shut up, youngster!" said Reginald, good-naturedly; "your turn will come later. I want to talk to the girls if you don't, and I want to know about Miss Stuart's eyes."

Presently they met Mrs. Manning, who of course



was surprised and delighted to see them, and then she turned back with the girls to her *pension*, and Reginald and Freddy went off together. They did not stay there long, however, for both girls felt a nervous impatience to hear the result of Diana's visit, and they soon went back to their own rooms in order to be there when she should come in. Lois embroidered, and Hope made a pretence of writing letters, but most of the time she sat staring into space with her pen in her hand.

"I wish we had stayed out of doors," she said at last. "This room is so dark and that big stove is so gloomy. Wiesbaden looks like a cheerful place out of doors, for the sun seems able to shine here as it couldn't in Brussels, and the great spaces and parks and all sorts of open places make it bright and breathable."

"That is a new word," said Lois. "This room isn't very breathable."

"No. That piazza roof over the window makes it so dark, and this dismal stove and the heavy furniture are so depressing. However, I like it here so far, and if only Di's eyes are not as bad as we fear, I shall not be sorry we had to come here. It is so nice to see the Mannings again. I wish we could keep with them. I think they would like it, too."



"Perhaps we should see Sir Galahad."

Hope glanced sharply at Lois, who was calmly choosing her shades of silk.

"Yes, but I doubt it. He must be hard at work at the hospital. Of the two sons I think I would rather have Reggie with us. He is such a natural sort of a boy; no affectation, no pretence of being any older than he is, like so many boys of that age."

"I don't think there is any affectation about Arthur. If there had been we shouldn't have given him the name of Sir Galahad."

"No, that is true; but as he is older we can't be as much at home with him as we are with Reggie. We treat him as we do Freddy." Hope stopped to laugh at her own speech, and then added: "Fortunately, we don't have to draw lots to see which of us shall play some tiresome game with him; neither do we suddenly have to take to our heels and run madly through the streets of a strange city to catch him. I am thankful to feel that there is only one Freddy in our party. I trust there is but one of the kind in the world. Oh, Lois, will Di never come? I feel as if I couldn't wait another minute."

"If you only would do some kind of work, Hope. It is so calming."



"It wouldn't calm me! If I felt that I had to match those shades, and take stitches just so long and in just such a direction, no more and no less, and keep the silk smooth and neat, I should roll the whole thing up in a bunch and stuff it into the stove. The best use it could be put to, for perhaps it would brisk up this lazy old fire. Ah, here they are!"

The door opened, and Mrs. Webster and Diana came into the room.

"Where is Freddy?" were his mother's first words.

"Off with Reggie Manning. Diana?"

"Cheer up," said Diana, smiling. "It isn't as bad as we feared."

"Di! Are you all right?"

"Not quite all right; but I am not going to lose my sight."

"Oh, no!" said Mrs. Webster. "For my part, I never thought you were. You all persisted so in looking at the darkest side of it. Plenty of people have trouble with their eyes. I have had pain in them myself."

"No doubt," said Hope. "You have had pain in every part of you, I should think, from what you have told me. But will one of you please tell us what the doctor said?"



"There is inflammation of the membrane and trouble with the nerves, and he gave it all sorts of long names," said Diana. "Fortunately, he speaks English as well as we do, and he is very nice. I feel that he can be depended upon, don't you, Mrs. Webster?"

"Perfectly, and I am an excellent judge of character. But we shall have to stay here for some time. However, I don't altogether mind that, for with the Mannings here, and the Kurhaus, and the waters —"

"But what else did he say?" asked Hope, interrupting her.

"He said that they must be treated for a few weeks," replied Diana, "and later he can tell better what I must do. For the present I must not use them in any way, and must be out of doors as much as possible. No painting, no looking closely at things, no reading or writing. I am to go to him for treatment, and perhaps in the end I shall have to wear glasses."

"Diana!"

Both girls gazed at her, round-eyed and regretful.

"Oh, that isn't so bad," said Diana, cheerfully. "Lots of people wear glasses, and just think how much worse it would be if he had told me I should



become blind some day, or would have to have an operation, or some dreadful thing like that. Now, don't worry, girls. Just let us have a good time here in Wiesbaden. It is an attractive place, and we are all going to subscribe at the Kurhaus and get our fill of music, and have a good time generally, aren't we, Mrs. Webster? We have decided it all on our way home from the doctor's."

They talked gayly for a little while. Mrs. Webster described the long waiting in the oculist's reception room before they could see the famous man, and the odd-looking people who had waited there with them before their turn came to pass into the inner office. Then she went to her own room, and after a few minutes Diana also rose.

"I am going to my little room for a while," said she; "and, girls, I am tired and want to rest a little. We shall probably be doing a good deal this afternoon, so I will shut the door between and lie down."

And when the door was shut and she heard the murmur of voices on the other side and knew that the girls were talking, cheered by the news she had given them, she threw herself on the bed in a misery of silent tears. Was this what she had dreamed of and saved for? Was this to be the only result of her trip to Europe? Was there no way



out of the trouble? For the oculist had told her very frankly that it might be years before she would be able to use her eyes for painting, and even that was doubtful.

"They are extremely sensitive eyes," said he. "You have needed spectacles for a long time, and the strain has been ferry great. Time and much patience may gif you help, but it will be a long time."

Diana had made Mrs. Webster promise not to tell this. "I can bear it better if no one else knows it," said she. And now, alone in her little room, she fought the battle that in one form or another comes to so many in their journey through life.



## CHAPTER SEVEN.

**I**T was a cold day, but the sun shone brightly. In the Kurpark the frozen lake was covered with men, women, and children, skating to the gay strains of a band of music that was stationed in a pavilion on the bank. Spectators thronged the broad walks, spectators from every nation on the face of the earth, the men in their fur-lined coats and fur caps, the women in heavy cloaks, the children in garments of bright colors. There were invalids in their rolling-chairs, pushed hither by their attendants to watch the animated scene, and gazing contentedly at their more fortunate fellow-beings. There were rich and poor, high and low, Russian princes, German philosophers, English tourists, American sightseers; men who looked like anarchists, who no doubt were peaceful and law-abiding citizens, and others with innocent countenances, who perhaps were plotting dreadful deeds,—there they all were, walking about or standing still to watch the merry skaters, who darted hither and thither on the ice, cutting figures and performing prodigious feats of skill.



The sky was blue, there was a bluish tinge to the ice, and to the light snow that covered the trees, while their trunks were of a vivid green. In the distance woodmen were lopping off some branches, which fell crashing to the ground, and above the sound of that, and of the humming of the myriads of skates that cut the ice, and the din of laughter and conversation in all the languages known to Europe, rose the strains of "The Washington Post."

"Isn't it exciting to hear that away off here!" said Hope. "I feel almost as much thrilled as if it were 'The Star-spangled Banner' itself. Oh, what fun this is!"

They were all on the ice, Mrs. Webster, the three girls, Reginald, and Freddy, and with them was a young Englishman with whom Reginald had become acquainted. His name was Harold Edward Cecil Beauchamp, and he was a tall, good-looking youth of twenty, with an open face and honest blue eyes, and a newly born, but none the less genuine, admiration for all things American, especially American girls. He had never been away from his island before, and he was greatly surprised to find that so much that was good could exist beyond its limits.

"My word! But you did that jolly well!" he exclaimed, as the three girls, with their arms inter-

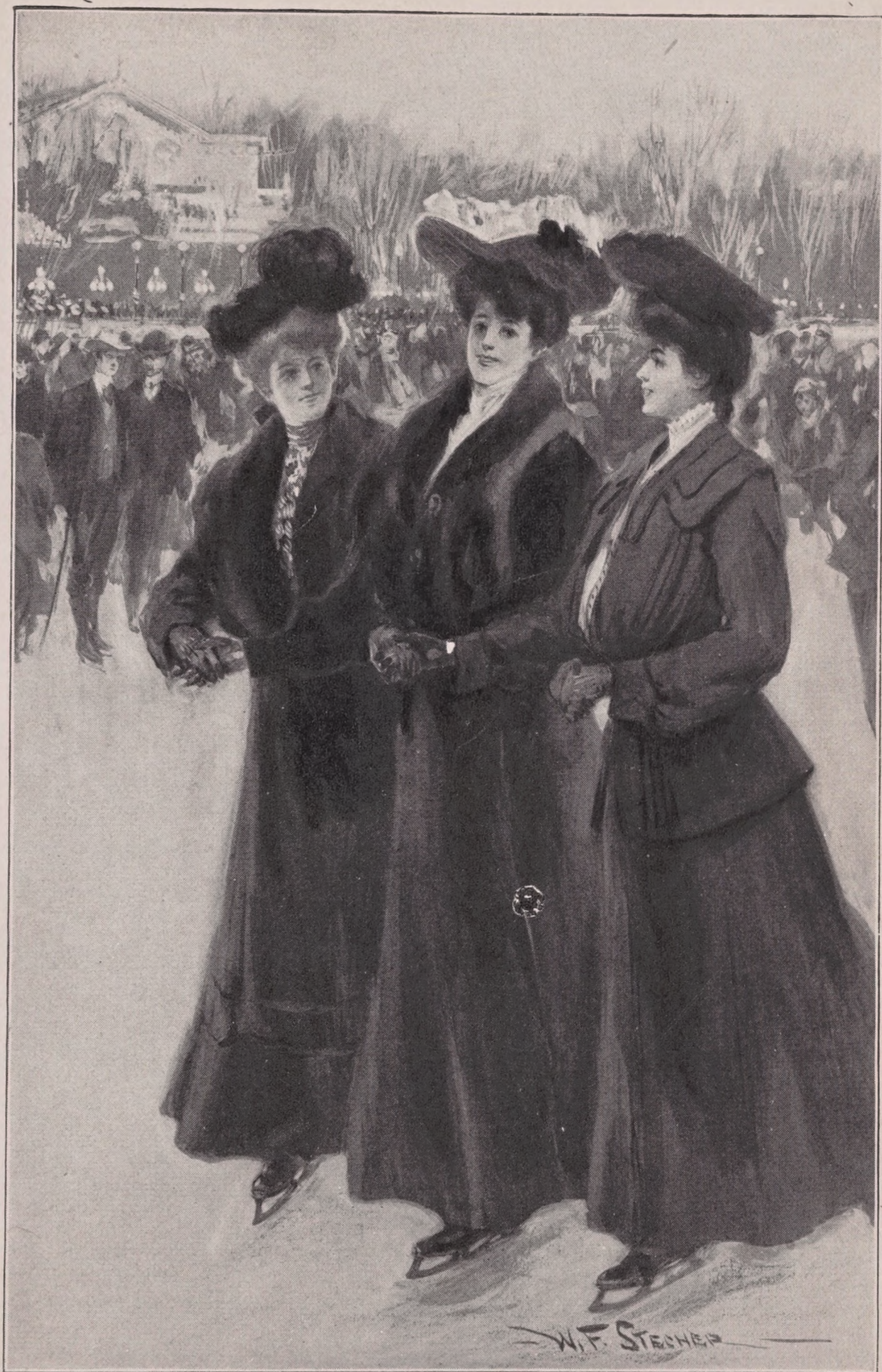


twined, curved and glided round about and in and out, inclining now this way and now that, with an indescribable grace. The three had skated together winter after winter on the pond at home, and there was no end to the wonderful figures which they could perform on the ice.

Naturally, their skill appealed very strongly to the sport-loving young Englishman. He had not yet been able to decide which of the three girls he most admired. Miss Putnam was the prettiest — of that there was no doubt. And she was also the easiest of comprehension. She usually said what she meant, no more and no less, which was a source of great satisfaction to him. Miss Stuart was very handsome, and a certain expression in her face made her really beautiful. She was very stately, and in that she reminded him of English girls, with their slow, quiet movements, and their high-bred air of repose. And then there was Miss Conway. She was not exactly pretty, and yet who could look at her bright, whimsical face, over which the varying expressions chased one another with every passing emotion, without wishing to look again?

“I give you my word,” said he to Reginald, as they stood apart on the ice, “I never know what Miss Conway is going to say next, nor what she





HE HAD NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO DECIDE WHICH OF THE  
THREE GIRLS HE MOST ADMIRER.







means when she says it. And she's so awfully clever, you know! Fancy one of my sisters taking charge of a party of tourists like this, and travelling on the Continent, don't you know, and keeping the accounts! And there is nothing those girls can't do in the open. I have always supposed that it was only we English who cared for sports, but they tell me that in the States not only do they play tennis and golf, but even cricket, and your American game of baseball."

"Oh, yes," said Reginald, "and American girls can sail their own boats, drive, ride, play polo; in fact, they are good for any old game that comes along."

The English boy stared. "Do you mean that young women play on the polo teams?" he asked.

"Oh, well, not that exactly, but they play among themselves sometimes. Not every one, of course. But I'll tell you this, old fellow! Whatever she does, from cooking to cricket, the American girl does well! Hoop-la! Three cheers for the conquerors of the world!"

"What have you two been discussing?" asked Hope, wheeling up to them. "I hope Reggie hasn't been waving the stars and stripes in your face, Mr. Beauchamp?"



"Oh, no, Miss Conway! He hasn't a bit of a flag about him," returned the boy, quite seriously; and then he wondered all the rest of the afternoon what he had said that seemed to amuse them—for he was quite sure that they were amused, although they had suppressed their laughter almost immediately. He knew that it was some joke upon him.

"Mrs. Manning has asked us all to come to her rooms for a cup of tea," continued Hope. "There is to be no concert this afternoon. Once a month they omit it, I believe. We are going to skate a little while longer, and then meet there." And off she went again, followed by young Beauchamp, while Reginald joined the other girls.

They had been in Wiesbaden about two weeks. Diana went frequently to the oculist and was wearing her new glasses, but her eyes as yet had shown but little improvement. However, it was not to be expected that they would be cured at once. Of the large hole that these visits to oculist and optician were making in her purse she dared not think. The doctor urged her to be out of doors as much as possible, and as the continued cold made skating excellent, every afternoon was spent on the lake. The concert in the Kurhaus began at four o'clock, and at that hour those who preferred to listen to the



music went in, while the others skated until they were tired and then followed them. The Mannings and young Beauchamp were with the Hazelmere party most of the time, and all that was done in the way of sight-seeing or amusement they did together. It was a wholesome, happy life, and had it not been for the anxiety about Diana, it would have been wholly enjoyable. Except for that, no one regretted the unexpected visit in Wiesbaden, for it gave them a glimpse of life at a German "cure" that they would not otherwise have had.

"I hope I have enough cups and saucers to go around," said Mrs. Manning when, a little later in the afternoon, they had all gathered in her room, hungry after their sport. "Fräulein Messer has lent me some, and I have a few that I carry about with me. And now I have a surprise for you! We are going to have some coffee. I bought a biggin this morning, and Reggie is going to make the coffee."

"At last I shall see a *Kaffee-Klatsch*," said Hope. "I have been longing ever since I left home to go to one, but we don't seem to become sufficiently intimate with the natives to be invited to their gatherings."

"What is a *Kaffee-Klatsch*?" asked Reginald, "*Kaffee* explains itself, but what is *Klatsch*?"



"You all sit around and talk and gossip; that is the *Klatsch*. It is an afternoon coffee, instead of an afternoon tea. They always do it in German novels, and the guest of honor sits on the sofa. German ladies, when they wish to be polite, always ask you to sit on the sofa, and if there is a married lady present, it would be considered the height of rudeness to give her a mere chair while an unmarried one sat on the sofa."

"Hope knows so much," said Diana. "Where does she pick it all up?"

"I know that Reggie's coffee smells good," said Hope. "What fun it is to picnic with an alcohol lamp and all these fixings! Ever so much nicer than a set tea-table. I suppose Mr. Beauchamp is going to take tea."

"Oh, yes!" said he. "I always do, you know."

"Benighted boy, never to take coffee! But at least you will have a slice of lemon in it?"

"Oh, no, not by any means."

"You look quite frightened at the mere suggestion. Have you ever tried it?"

"No. Why should I? I like my tea as I have always had it. Why should I change?"

"Why, indeed?" said Hope, looking at him pensively. "I suppose that is just the difference



between the Englishman and the American. The Englishman takes things as he has always had them, and is satisfied. The American is ever seeking to improve what he has. But I suppose you can't deny that it is an English proverb which says, 'There is always room for improvement'?"

"I thought you were going to say, 'There is always room at the top,' and I was all ready to tell you that that is essentially American," said Reginald.

"But do you never vary in anything, Mr. Beauchamp?" asked Hope. "Do you do everything just exactly as your father and grandfather and great-grandfather did it?"

"Exactly," replied the young man, "or as nearly like it as we can."

"How fearfully monotonous! And what would become of the world's improvement if we all felt that way? If every one were perfectly satisfied with things as they are? But there is one thing, Mr. Beauchamp, that I have been wanting to ask you. Why, when your name from its spelling should be pronounced 'Boshomp,' do you call it 'Beechum'?"

"I suppose because we have always done so," he replied seriously. "Why shouldn't we? My word!



What have I said now? There is no end to your American jokes."

When the laughter had subsided, Reginald announced that the coffee was done.

In the meantime Freddy Webster had been left to his own resources. He was allowed more freedom in Wiesbaden than had been the case in Brussels. It was a much smaller city and of a totally different kind from the Belgian capital, and even if the boy were to get lost, which was not likely, the Germans are a kind and friendly race, and he would be well treated and helped to find his friends. Besides which, German civic affairs are managed with such military precision and clock-like regularity that it would be impossible for Freddy to go very far wrong.

On this particular day he had told his mother that he would skate a little longer and then go back to their *pension*.

"I don't want any old tea," said he, "and Reggie's no good when the girls are around. I'll have some fun here by myself." So his mother departed, and he was left to his own devices.

The first thing that he did when his friends were out of sight was to remove his skates and hurry to another pond, still in the Kurpark, but in that part



of the grounds that was near the *Wilhelm Strasse*. This pond was free to all comers, while on the lake where he had spent the afternoon only those were admitted who had subscribed at the Kurhaus. Freddy's democratic spirit had a longing for "the masses." He had watched the small boys who went to and from school every day with their knapsacks on their shoulders, for in Germany they even carry their first readers in knapsacks. Freddy had watched them, and he longed to be one of them. His soul was fired with martial ardor just now, and his fourth great ambition began to take shape.

He would be a soldier! He had once fancied in the old days at home that the career of a newsboy would be desirable. There was a zest, an excitement about a life that seemed to consist in swinging on and off swiftly moving trolley cars, that appealed to him. Then, too, it would be a pleasure to shout into people's ears, in a high cracked voice: "Papes! Papes! Full account of the great fire." Or it might be a murder or an election that must be announced. He had also at one time wished to be a car conductor. To gather five-cent pieces all day long and jingle them richly in one's pocket, and, above all, to ring that fascinating bell for every fare, would be an immense source of pleasure.



Latterly, however, his fancy had wandered to Washington. He, Frederic Wade Webster, might one day figure in the school histories as President of the United States. Why not? Any American boy might eventually get to the White House. This profession still attracted him, and the fact that he now wished to be a soldier did not interfere with it. Indeed, it might help him to attain the desired end. It would not be the first time that a military man had been called to rule the nation, and General Webster was a title that sounded well. He threw back his shoulders as he thought these things, and strutted through the park just as the small German boys strutted, only he wore no cape as they did. At home he would have scorned a cape and called it a girl's; no self-respecting American boy of nine would be seen in a cape, but in Germany one's standards change. He wished now that he had one, as he stopped on the bank to buckle on his skates.

This pond was as crowded as the other had been, but with a different class of people. There were boys here of all ages, and they were having quite as good a time as those on the lake, who had paid for the privilege and who had a band of music to enliven them. They stared at Freddy when he joined them. He, with his hands in his pockets, circled



about and pretended to be unconscious of their presence. They gathered in a group and made remarks about him. He was quite sure that they were about him, for he heard "*Das Kind Amerikaner!*" "*Der kleine Knabe Amerikaner!*" He had picked up a little German, but he could not understand the torrent of words that followed.

These boys did not seem to like his coming, for even though Freddy could not understand what they said, their gestures and the expression of their faces were perfectly intelligible. He determined to impress them.

He began with a mild "figure 8" on the ice which grew smaller and smaller. Then, with his hands in his pockets, he performed other feats which he had learned that very afternoon from Reginald. He would show these self-satisfied Germans what he could do, he said to himself. They would soon be forced to acknowledge that America led the world; and he skated wildly around and around, growing dizzier and dizzier with every turn, until — Crash! Bang! Freddy saw stars spinning through space, and found that he was flat on his back, while a crowd of German boys gathered about him, howling, jeering, laughing, pointing, and pouring forth a torrent of gutturals over his prostrate form.



He did not know what they were saying, — that they were telling him in their own way that it served him right, that he had no business to trespass on their pond, that he was a rich *Amerikaner* who, with money in his pockets, had been skating all the afternoon on the lake of the wealthy and the high-born, and therefore had no right to be here on the pond of the poor and the free, — but he realized that the sooner he removed himself from among them, the better it would be for him.

He did not say a word, but sat up and unbuckled his skates. Then he rose to his feet. He was a small boy for his age, and the Germans are a stalwart race. They were all bigger than he was, but Freddy's spirit never quailed. He looked from one to the other of them, gathered as they were in a compact mass on all sides of him.

"You're a lot of cowards!" said he. "You are great big bullies! I wouldn't stay with you if I could. Come now, get out of my way!" And he hurled his skates by their straps around and around his head, as he had seen an Indian wield his tomahawk in Buffalo Bill's "Wild West Show." Instinctively the German boys fell back. Quick as a flash, Freddy bolted through the circle at the spot where it was weakest. No one tried to stay him and no



one followed. They had not intended to do him harm; they had only wished him to go. He had now gone, and after a few words of comment and commendation the boys returned to their skating. They recognized courage when they saw it, and they admired it.

Freddy Webster trotted home. He would certainly be a soldier and as certainly President of the United States. He would declare war on Germany and himself lead his troops to battle. There was nothing he would like better than to march on Wiesbaden and shoot down every man of them. In the meantime he would go to the *pension* and see what he could find to amuse him there.

As he climbed the hill on the top of which the Villa Rosa was situated, he saw a small figure dressed in dainty furs and with a bright scarlet cap upon her dark curls. It was the little Russian girl, who had been out for her daily walk with her German governess. The child's mother, Madame d'Ormossipoff, rarely allowed her to leave her side, but she was not strong, and sometimes the little Tana was sent out with the *Fräulein* for a sedate constitutional. She was called "Tana," which were the last two syllables of a name of extraordinary and unpronounceable length.



She was a very studious and a very demure little girl, but she was by no means indifferent to the fascinations of Freddy. She had never been allowed to associate with other children, and she did not know in the least how to play with them. To read, study, and chatter in four different languages with her mother had thus far constituted existence for her, but the coming of this American boy had brought a new interest into the daily monotony.

Freddy had at first scarcely noticed the little girl, but there had been one or two rainy days when he had met her in the salon of the *pension* and had looked at her books, and had in turn showed her a wonderful "bird-book" of his own. Then they had played a game of "Halma," Tana going first to her mother to ask permission, and then sitting down to the game with solemn eyes and a sedate expression that never varied. Afterward she became less dignified and "grown-up." The shyness wore away somewhat, and in its place came an intense admiration for the *kleine Knabe* which flattered Freddy's self-esteem. He pardoned her the four languages, which he at first had been inclined to scorn, for he was glad enough to have some one of his own age who would talk to him in one of them, and in a certain way this oddly assorted pair had become fast friends.



"Hello!" said Freddy, coming up behind her halfway up the hill. "I say, Tana, wait a minute for me! Where have you been?"

"I have been walking in the Kurpark and watching the skaters. I saw you among them," said the little girl.

Freddy felt somewhat disturbed. Had Tana seen him in his hour of humiliation? "Where was I? What was I doing?" he asked.

"You were on the lake, and you were performing excellently with your skates. And there were also Monsieur Reginald and *les demoiselles*. They, too, went back and forth, oh, so swiftly! My mamma tells me that in my country the ladies and gentlemen are the skaters the most wonderful in the world, but she permits me not to skate. She fears that the ice may give me cold. My mamma is ever fearful that I cold may be given."

The little girl's conversation was a mixture of the idioms of her four languages, and when she spoke English she was apt to place her words oddly.

"Oh, it wouldn't give you cold," said Freddy, his spirits rising again when he found that Tana had not witnessed his recent discomfiture. "I say, what's the matter with *Fräulein*?"



"She has received unhappy tidings," said the little girl, taking her arm from that of the governess to whom she had been clinging, and falling back for a moment with Freddy.

The German girl stopped and pressed her handkerchief to her eyes. "I am, indeed, unhappy," she said. "I have met my sister, who told me that my father is taken suddenly ill. We live at the other end of the city, beyond the *Rhein-Strasse*. She was coming to inform me, and now she has returned, and I am to follow her as soon as I have walked with Tana to her home. *Ach, mein Vater! Mein theurer Vater!* He may even now be dead!"

Freddy's cheerful face grew grave and sympathetic. "That's too bad," said he. "I wish I had a father, don't you, Tana? It's awful hard luck to have one and to have him die. Why don't you go home now, *Fräulein*, as fast as you can scurry? I'll take Tana home. We're 'most there now."

"Oh, but Madame!" said the girl. "You are indeed a good little boy, but Madame has strictly forbidden that I should leave Tana in the street even for a moment. She must never be alone."

"But she won't be alone," urged Freddy; "I'm with her, and I'm a boy, and so I know how to take care of her. In America the boys always look after



the girls." He had learned this bit of etiquette recently from his model, Reginald Manning.

Fräulein Essler hesitated. "I would so like to go, and so save these ten minutes!" she murmured.

"Then go quick or you won't save 'em," said Freddy, with the peremptory air that had often been successful with his mother. The governess hesitated no longer.

"*Beeilen Sie sich, Tana,*" she said, as she turned away, "*und gehen Sie ins Haus gleich!*" And she hurried down the hill.

The children walked on. It was still light, although it was after four o'clock. The days were growing longer now, and in the south of Germany night did not fall as early as it had in Brussels. The thin coating of snow that covered the earth added to the effect of brightness, and the clear, cold air was exhilarating.

"Wish we didn't have to go into the house yet!" said Freddy, as they reached the corner of the street upon which was the Villa Rosa.

"I also wish it," replied Tana.

They paused. Freddy looked at Tana; she kept her dark eyes fixed steadfastly on the ground.

"Will you take a little longer walk?" he asked. His tone and manner were most persuasive. "I



know the way to an awfully nice walk in the woods."

"But my mamma?" objected Tana, with a swift upward glance. "She forbids me to walk more than I have already walked, and I am to return at four *sans faute*. Also, I am forbidden to walk alone."

"You're not alone, for I'm with you, and I don't believe it's anywhere near four o'clock. It seems only about a minute since we had dinner. Come! She won't mind. It's a nice place. It's those woods that they call the Neroberg."

"The Neroberg!" cried Tana. "I have ever wished to walk to the Neroberg, but my mamma and Fräulein, they insist always upon promenading on the streets with the shops, or in the Kurpark, where one meets the people."

"Come, then," said Freddy, "now's our chance! We'll go just a little way, and when we get back it will still be early, and we'll tell your mother all about it. I'll take good care of you. I know the way. Come!"

And Tana, with one last, doubting glance in the direction of the Villa Rosa, obeyed.



## CHAPTER EIGHT.

IT was about half-past five o'clock that afternoon when Mrs. Webster and the three girls left Mrs. Manning's rooms, accompanied by Reginald and young Beauchamp.

"Let us walk back through the Kurpark," said Mrs. Webster, "and look for Freddy. I told him not to stay late, but no doubt he has forgotten all about the time."

There were but few skaters left on the ice, and it was not difficult to see that Freddy was not among them.

"No, he has gone home," said Mrs. Webster, with satisfaction, after she had paused for a moment and surveyed the lake. "Dear boy, he is so good! I have no doubt we shall find him sitting by the lamp and contentedly reading. He has so many resources."

"He has, indeed!" murmured Hope to Cecil Beauchamp. "So many that we are always wondering which resource he is going to make use of



next. It wouldn't surprise me in the least to find that he has been buying some dreadful American invention again and is planning to play a trick with it on the Russian lady, or some other timid boarder." And then she described their experiences in Brussels, which Cecil found very diverting.

"May we go in with you and see what he is doing?" asked Reginald. And permission being willingly granted, they all went into the salon.

Here they found an excited group. Madame d'Ormossipoff was standing in the middle of the room, her frowsy hair pushed back from her thin, agitated face, her great black eyes gleaming like live coals, her whole form quivering with nervousness; Fräulein Heckmann, who kept the *pension*, was there, and Mrs. Rush and Miss Wood, two English ladies, and one or two other people, all of whom were gathered about Madame d'Ormossipoff and were trying in vain to soothe her. She was speaking in English when the Americans entered, breaking at times into French.

"Have you seen her?" she cried, darting forward and seizing Mrs. Webster's hands. "Have you seen my little Tana? Perhaps your little boy would know. Where is he?"

"He is at home, and probably up in my room,"



replied Mrs. Webster. "But what is the trouble, Madame? Where is Tana?"

"Ah! Where, indeed? *La pauvre petite!* She is lost, or something has happened *sans doute!* She is gone to take the promenade with her governess as usual, and has never returned! At four o'clock should she have arrived. It is now six, and there is no Tana! No sign, no message. Of what is that German girl thinking that she informs me not of what has happened? She is afraid to return and tell me! That is it! That is the secret of her absence! I shall employ her no more. She shall be dismissed *toute de suite*. Perhaps your Freddy will have seen my little girl, Madame. Will you have the kindness to make inquiries?"

Mrs. Webster at once left the room, not without some foreboding in her own heart, while the girls asked the English ladies to give them some account of what the trouble really was. Madame d'Ormosipoff's agitation was so great that it was difficult to understand her.

There was not much to tell, however. Tana and her governess had not come home, and within the last half-hour a messenger had been despatched to the Fräulein's house to learn if anything was known there. It would be some time before she returned,



however, for the Essler family lived at a great distance from the Villa Rosa.

"Madame did not think of doing that at first," said Mrs. Rush. "I suppose she was too much excited to think of anything, but Miss Wood suggested sending. We have already been to your rooms to try to find out something from Freddy, but he was not there."

The door of the salon opened again, and Mrs. Webster looked in. Her face was white, and with a frightened gesture she beckoned to Hope, who went out into the hall and closed the door behind her. She knew perfectly well what was coming.

"Hope, he isn't there!" said Mrs. Webster. "I have looked everywhere, in all the rooms, and he isn't there!"

"Do you suppose he is with Tana?"

"Certainly not! Why should he be with Tana? He has broken through the ice and fallen in! He is drowned! I am a most unfortunate and unhappy woman! Oh, Hope, where is he?"

"Oh, he is probably quite safe somewhere, Mrs. Webster. We must look him up, that is all. You know Freddy loves to hide and frighten us. No doubt he is at this minute watching us from somewhere, and having a good laugh at our expense.



He has done it often enough for us to know what to expect. Come into the salon and sit down while we hunt. I wish he had chosen some other time, though, for it seems really serious about little Tana."

Mrs. Webster, somewhat revived by these cheering words, suffered herself to be led back to the salon. She sat there while the girls searched every nook and corner of the house where Freddy could by any possibility have hidden himself. He was not to be found.

"I really am afraid he hasn't come home," said Lois at last, "for his coat and cap aren't anywhere about, nor his gloves, nor his skates. He usually leaves his things lying about, just where they happen to fall."

"He may have them on," said Hope, opening closet doors, looking under the bed for at least the fifth time, and even investigating the stove. "I expect to find him in the oven. But girls, if he isn't in the house, I am sure he is with Tana. I know he is at the bottom of that scrape."

"Hope! You are always ready to believe the worst of Freddy," said Lois.

"I have not been without experience. Well, we can't find him, so we may as well go down and



tell Mrs. Webster. With two frightened mothers on our hands, what are we going to do?"

"I am glad the boys came home with us," said Diana. "They both have plenty of common sense, and will know the best thing to do."

"I think it requires a vast amount of *un*-common sense to keep even with Freddy," remarked Hope.

The boys at once offered to search the Kurpark, and to make inquiries of any one whom they should happen to meet who would be in a position to know anything, policemen, guards, and officials at the Kurhaus.

"If there has been any accident anywhere, we will find out about it," whispered young Beauchamp. "It is lucky we both speak German."

They were just leaving the house when the messenger who had been sent to the home of Fräulein Essler returned, and they came back to hear what she had learned. She brought a note to Madame d'Ormossipoff.

"It is from the Fräulein herself!" screamed the Russian lady when she saw the address. She tore it open and read it. "Ah-ha!" she cried, turning to Mrs. Webster. "It is as I thought! *C'est votre fils — le petit méchant! — c'est lui qui l'a fait! Lisez-le!*" And she flung the note at Freddy's



mother, who picked it up and looked at it helplessly. What did those crooked, quavering German hieroglyphics say about Freddy?

"I can't read it," she murmured. "Somebody come quickly and read it to me!"

Cecil Beauchamp seized the crumpled sheet and, smoothing it out, he read as follows, translating rather literally:—

"HONORED AND ESTEEMED MADAM: On our walk I met my sister, who was coming in haste to tell me of the extreme illness of my father. I left her, and with the little Tana toward the Villa Rosa hurried. I intended her to her mother to return before I my own home should seek. On the *Geisberg-Strasse* we by the little American boy were overtaken. He offered the little Tana to the *pension* to escort, while I lost no time in to the bedside of my father coming. After much entreaty from Herr Freddy, I to do this consented. They were within but a short distance of the Villa Rosa, and I no harm could imagine. I left them and to this house returned. My father is dead."

A hush fell upon the group when the young Englishman's voice ceased. What a tragedy it was!



And in the meantime where were the children? There was no time to be lost, and the boys consulted with Fräulein Heckmann as to what would best be done.

When Freddy and Tana turned away from the street upon which was the Villa Rosa, and followed that which led to the Neroberg, they had no intention of staying out more than ten or fifteen minutes longer, at the most. The Neroberg is the name of a beautiful wood which extends over a large tract of land to the northeast of Wiesbaden. The outskirts of this wood were not far from the Villa Rosa, and Freddy had once walked there with Reginald. Ever since that day he had longed to go again, but the skating had been so good that no one had wished to give it up for a walk in the woods; least of all Freddy himself.

Now, however, it seemed an excellent opportunity to see just a little more of those paths which apparently led to all sorts of delightful resorts, beneath the tall trees of this German forest. The two children trudged along the road at a brisk pace. Tana's dark curls bobbed up and down beneath her scarlet cap, and the color came into her cheeks with the unusual exercise. This was altogether different



from the slow, sedate walks with her mother or her governess, and the child's eyes lost for a time their strange, sombre look of having watched the world for many weary years.

"Do you have the forest in your country?" she asked, as they followed a broad path up over a hill. They were in the woods now. No one had walked here since the light fall of snow, a few days before, for their footprints were the first to mar its unbroken smoothness. At this season the Neroberg was deserted.

"Oh, yes," replied Freddy; "we have lots of forests, and a great deal bigger ones than this little wood." He glanced upward at the lofty pines, which were so tall that their tops seemed out of sight.

"Everything in your country, then, is larger than in Europe," said Tana. "You have told me that your lakes and your rivers are so large that one cannot see from shore to shore, that your houses in your cities reach to the blue heavens, and now that your forests are greater than this. America must be a very wonderful place."

"Oh, yes, it is. Everything is pretty big there. We have lots of different sizes of forests and trees. Why, there are some trees in America that if you



were to cut 'em down and make a hole through the middle of 'em, you could drive a horse and cart right through. Guess you could get a trolley car through. What you call a tram, you know."

Tana's eyes grew big with astonishment. "And are many of your trees like that?"

"Oh, no, not so very many. Those big trees grow out in California. That's thousands of miles from where I live. We don't have 'em 'round Baltimore. But we have lots of other big things," said Young America.

"Do you have the wolves?" asked the little Russian.

"Wolves!" repeated Freddy, looking around apprehensively. "Not where I live, but there are some out West, I guess, and there are buffaloes and things. They're bigger than wolves."

"In my country there are the wolves, and my Mamma has told me tales of swift rides across the snow in a sleigh, when far off arises the cry of the wolves which follow, follow, drawing nearer and nearer —"

"Do they have 'em in Germany?" asked Freddy, breaking in upon her recital with scant ceremony.

"I think not. In Wiesbaden there are none."

"I'm glad of that. I'd like to see a wolf well



enough, though, and if one were to come along now, I'd fight him off pretty quick. You needn't be in the least bit afraid, Tana, for I'll take care of you, you know. I'd just swing my skates around and around my head, like this,"—he whirled them about with lightning rapidity, — "and then let them go straight at the wolf's eyes." He relaxed his hold, and the skates went flying through the trees and fell to the ground at some distance from where the children were standing, for in the excitement of this thrilling conversation they had paused. Then they both ran to pick them up.

"Here is another path, over this way," said Freddy. "Let's take that and go around by the Greek Chapel, and then down to the street, and home. That will be just a nice little walk."

But although they walked steadily for some distance, they saw no sign of the Greek Chapel. This was a very beautiful building, with five golden domes, and it could be seen through the trees, when the day was bright, from the forest side, and was always visible from the town. It was built to mark the tomb of a Russian princess, and was on the side of the hill. A fine view of the city and the surrounding country could be had from there, for the ground sloped abruptly to the streets far



below. Freddy had already been there more than once with his friends; he had never approached it in just this way, but he had a general idea of its position, and he had great confidence in his own ability to find his way about. This perfect confidence in himself had led Freddy into difficulties of various kinds before this, but it remained unshaken.

If they had stayed in the path by which they had entered the woods, all would have been well, for it led directly to the Chapel, but the digression caused by the throwing of the skates and Freddy's unlucky decision to try a new path were fatal. It was growing dark rapidly, for here in the forest the pines shut off the daylight long before it left the outer world. It was now too dark to read the signs that were far above the heads of the children and which marked the intersecting paths. Freddy looked about him. It was perfectly still. The birds which he had seen here in the daytime — rooks, thrushes, and lively sparrows — had vanished. They were all asleep, no doubt, with the coming of night. He looked up. Had he told Tana that there were taller trees in America? Then he had said what was not true.

"I guess I made a mistake, Tana," he said, slowly. "These trees are bigger than any I ever saw at home."



"But the horse and wagon, and the electric tram? Is it not, then, true that —"

"Oh, yes, that's true enough out in California, only I have never seen them, and I don't believe I want to. These German trees are big enough. Tana" — he hesitated. The little girl turned inquiring eyes upon him. "You're quite sure you didn't make a mistake, too?"

"A mistake?"

"Yes. About the wolves, you know. About there not being any around here."

"Here in Wiesbaden?" The little Russian laughed her sedate, grown-up laugh. "Ah, no! They are tales of my country that my Mamma tells me. The country where I myself have never lived. But I wish that I were now with my Mamma, Freddy. We have lingered too long in the wood. She will already be looking for me. Let us go to the Villa Rosa. Quick!"

"Yes, we're going," said Freddy, moving forward in precisely the wrong direction. "Here, take my hand, Tana, and we'll get along faster. Don't you be frightened, Tana. I'll take care of you. I'm glad you didn't make a mistake about the wolves. Isn't it quiet?"

It was very quiet. Freddy talked volubly as they



walked, but Tana said nothing. He looked at her once in a while to see if she were crying, but so far as he could tell she was not. On the whole she was behaving very well — for a girl.

“I wish you would say something once in a while,” said he, at last. “It’s awful still, and a feller can’t do all the talking.”

“*Je n’ai rien à dire,*” replied Tana. Her anguish of mind was too great for her to use any language but French, which was practically her native tongue. “*Je désire voir ma maman !*”

Freddy caught the word “maman,” and said no more. In silence they walked on. There was a faint white light in the woods. It was moonlight flickering through the branches and shining on the snow, and sometimes, away up above the tree-tops, Freddy caught a glimpse of the moon. It was a comfort to him to think that this was the same moon that shone upon America. It was not a German moon, as these were German trees and German snow, nor was it Russian, like the little girl beside him, nor French, like the only words she would say to him. It was an American moon as much as it was anything else.

“I guess I’ll whistle something,” said he, presently; and in a moment the lively refrain of



"Yankee Doodle" echoed shrilly through the forest.

Tana listened. "That is a beautiful music," said she in English. "Please continue."

"I'll tell you the words," said Freddy, eagerly, "and we'll sing it! You can sing, for I've heard you. It isn't a long song, and you say the same thing over and over again. It's just this: —

" 'Yankee Doodle came to town,  
Riding on a pony ;  
Stuck a feather in his hat,  
And called it Macaroni.' "

"What does it mean?" asked Tana, as she repeated the words after him, rolling the r's as they had never been rolled before in the old song.

"I don't know. Nobody knows, I guess. We all sing it, though. Now, here goes! You know the tune."

And so, hand in hand, they walked through the German forest singing "Yankee Doodle." The little Russian girl's sweet voice blended well with Freddy's high shrill soprano, and her foreign accent lent a quaint charm to the old words. Occasionally they would stop to rest, but in a few minutes they would begin again.

"It is more cheerful when we sing," said Tana.



At the Villa Rosa there was a hasty consultation after the Fräulein's note had been received. Fräulein Heckmann had advised going immediately to the authorities and putting the case in their hands. Cecil Beauchamp, however, objected to this.

"You have to go through with such a lot of formalities, don't you know!" said he, aside, to Reginald. "Here in Germany no one lifts a finger without being directed to do it by the person above him."

"I know," said Reginald. "There's such a lot of red tape necessary that I suppose they would telegraph to the Kaiser for permission before they would dare go out to look those children up. I have an idea! You know we didn't know until the note came that they were nearly home. We thought they might have been on the ice and have fallen in, or something like that. You see it was nothing of the kind. From what I know of Freddy, I think he has just gone off to some place and taken Tana. Probably to get ice cream, or something of that kind."

"You forget where you are," put in Hope. "You don't get ice cream in Germany; but I believe you are right in your theory, Reggie. Perhaps they went to walk, and have lost their way."



"In the Neroberg, perhaps!" exclaimed Reginald. "Freddy is always keen on going to the Neroberg, and he could easily get lost among all those paths. I say we look about a little before we go to the police, but don't tell them here that we have decided to do that or they will be sure to want us to do something different."

They had been standing apart from the other people. No one had noticed their conference, for there was so much to be done in caring for the two mothers. Mrs. Webster had gone to her room with Diana and one of the English ladies, while Madame d'Ormossipoff was in violent hysterics in the salon, and required the whole attention of Fräulein Heckmann and the other boarders, who could not understand her complete lack of all effort toward self-control.

Hope and Lois, with the two young men, hastily let themselves out by the front door. They walked out of the little courtyard and around to the corner of the street on which the governess had said she had left the two children.

"If they went to the Neroberg from here, it could have been by but one road," said Reginald.

They hurried up the incline which led to the steeper hill, and in a short time they had reached



the path into the woods. The moon, which had cheered Freddy in the forest, shone down on the snow, and showed the small footprints of the only two persons who had walked in that direction since the storm.

“We have done right!” cried Reginald, joyously, as he bent down to look. “These are children’s footprints! All we have to do is to follow carefully.”

It seemed easy enough out there in the moonlight, but it was a different matter when they got farther into the woods. Presently they reached the place from which Freddy had thrown the skates. The marks on the path disappeared abruptly.

“Where did they go?” asked Lois.

Cecil Beauchamp took some matches from his pocket. He lighted them carefully, one after another, and by the faint flame he scanned the snow on all sides.

“They went off here, through the trees,” said he. “What do you suppose made them do such an unusual thing as that? Why did they not keep to the beaten track?”

“I suppose,” said Hope, reluctantly, sorry to yield her point, but unable to resist the joke even



though it was upon herself, "I suppose because Freddy is an American boy. He was looking for something new, I am afraid."

"For once, then," said Beauchamp, "you will acknowledge that an English boy would have been wiser. He would have stuck to the old ways."

"Yes, just this once I will acknowledge it," said Hope.

"The laugh is on you this time, Hope," said Reginald; and they all joined in it in spite of their anxiety.



## CHAPTER NINE.

TEN minutes later the searching party had not progressed very far.

"I can't understand it," said Cecil. "As far as I can make out, they seem to have gone around in a circle. We have come back to almost the same spot we were at before. I am afraid we have missed it in some way."

"Hark!" said Hope, suddenly. "What is that?"

They all listened. In the distance was heard a faint sound.

"It is singing!" said Hope, in a whisper. "And Lois! Reggie! I do believe it is 'Yankee Doodle'!"

"It is!" exclaimed Reginald. "Let us shout!"

But Lois laid her hand on his arm and stopped him. "It might frighten them," she said. "Of course, if that is 'Yankee Doodle,' it is Freddy who is singing it. Wait and listen, and then we will go to them."

They did so, and presently, to their great relief, the singing began again, and they hurried in the



direction from which it appeared to come. Then it stopped.

"Let us sing it," said Hope. "They will hear us, and Freddy will know what it means."

They all sang with a will, the young Englishman's fine tenor ringing out clear and loud. They repeated it twice, and then Hope, whose voice was very strong, called the two children by name. Away off they heard a faint reply. They started at once in that direction, singing as they went, and occasionally stopping to call again. Each time, to their joy, the answer sounded nearer, and at last they came to a small pavilion, built in the woods for a resting-place for pedestrians in summer. Two small figures sat huddled together on one of the benches, and as they approached, one of these figures jumped to his feet and began to hop up and down. Of course it was Freddy.

"I thought it was you," said he. "I knew you'd be along. I have been telling Tana she needn't be afraid. These are awful big woods, and we've been all over 'em. And Tana's forgotten how to talk English and only says French things that sound like praying, except when we're singing 'Yankee Doodle.'"

Hope sat down on the bench and put her arms around the little girl.



*“C’est le bon Dieu qui nous a sauvé,”* murmured Tana. *“Ah, Mademoiselle, je suis fatiguée! Qui donc est Monsieur Yankee Doodle qui est venu? Toujours, toujours, nous chantons, ‘Yankee Doodle’s come to town.’”*

Cecil Beauchamp picked up the child in his strong young arms. “I will carry you home,” said he; “you are too tired to walk another step, and you are cold, too. The child is shivering.”

He put her down again, and hastily taking off his overcoat, he wrapped it about her.

“You will take cold yourself,” said Hope.

“Oh, no, I very seldom wear a coat.” And then he took Tana in his arms again, and the little procession started.

They found upon examining a sign-board that the path upon which the pavilion stood led directly to the opening in the woods by which they had entered, and it did not take long to reach it. The children had not at any time been very far from the outside world, although they had no doubt walked a great distance.

“You have given us all a dreadful fright, Freddy,” said Hope, who, now that her anxiety was at rest, allowed her indignation to find expression. “You have been a very naughty boy. Your mother is horribly frightened.”



"She is always getting frightened," returned Freddy, calmly.

"And as to Madame d'Ormossipoff, she is nearly crazy," continued Hope; "and Tana will be ill, I am sure. She is always guarded so carefully from any chance of taking cold. How could you do such a thing as come to the woods?"

"There wasn't any harm in it. Of course, I didn't suppose we'd go and get lost. If it hadn't got so dark we'd have been all right."

"See here, Freddy," said Reginald. "As I understand it, the governess left Tana in your care."

"Yes," said Freddy, rather reluctantly.

"And I suppose you promised to take care of her and take her right home."

"Yes, I said I'd take care of her."

"Do you think you kept your word?"

"Not exactly. Well, I took care of her in the woods."

"But you oughtn't to have been near the woods. The Fräulein trusted you, supposing, of course, that you were a gentleman and could therefore be trusted. A gentleman keeps his word. For my part, I haven't much opinion of a boy who is given the care of a little girl, and then breaks



his promise and takes her off into the woods and gets lost."

Freddy was silent. These words of condemnation from his favorite Reginald cut very deep. Then Tana raised her head from Cecil Beauchamp's shoulder. He was walking in front, and they had thought that she was asleep.

"It is not right that you should so speak to Freddy more than to me," she said. "I, too, wished to go to the Neroberg. And he sang to me and cheered me when I was *triste*. I like Freddy. Ah, but I am so tired!"

Then she put her head down again, and the rest of the way they walked in silence, while Reginald ran on ahead to reach the *pension* as soon as possible with the glad tidings of the children's safety.

After this episode life at the Villa Rosa was not as agreeable as it had been before. Tana was none the worse for the adventure, but her mother could not forgive Freddy for being the cause of such anxiety, and she herself suffered so much in consequence that she was ill for a week. Tana was not allowed to leave her room except for a walk every day with one of the English ladies, who took compassion on the child. She was forbidden to speak to Freddy, and could only look at him with



a mournful glance of the dark eyes when they chanced to meet on the stairs.

Freddy affected an indifference that he was far from feeling. It was very mortifying to find that he was considered beneath recognition. For the first time in his life he realized that his way was not altogether the best way, and the lesson, painful though it was, was good for him.

The fine weather, which had lasted an unusually long time, ceased soon after this, and there came a succession of storms and of dull, foggy days. A warm rain and the mist destroyed the skating, and life out of doors was no longer attractive. It was not much pleasanter within the house, for the rooms were dark, the stoves were hot, and, as usual in Germany, every breath of fresh air was carefully excluded. The Kurhaus was the only attraction at that time, with its reading-rooms and its daily concerts.

One morning Reginald Manning came early to the Villa Rosa. "It is a holiday," said he, "and there is going to be a parade and review of the troops. It is the two hundredth anniversary of Prussia becoming a kingdom, and it is being celebrated all through the country. Don't you want to come to the Kurhaus? It will all be in front



of the Kurhaus, and if we go now, I shouldn't wonder if we could get seats in one of the windows. The parade doesn't begin until twelve, but we'd better go soon. Mother is there already."

Before long they were all established in one of the windows of the reading-room, apparently engaged in reading the papers, but at the same time watching the scenes in the park. When the parade began and the other people came to the windows to watch it they found that the Americans, with their usual enterprise, were already "there."

It was a cold day, and there was a penetrating dampness, owing to the fog which hung about, lifting at intervals, but always near. There had been a light fall of snow the night before, just enough to cover every twig and branch in the lightest, airiest way. People gathered on all sides, and presently the troops began to congregate; the officers strutted proudly about and shouted their orders, the bands played national airs, and the review was soon in full force. When it was over, Hope and Lois, with Reginald and Cecil Beauchamp, walked through the Kurpark. In the distance they could hear the music of the band as some of the troops marched away. They felt intensely the strange thrill of excitement that martial music never



fails to inspire, and the effect was heightened by the dazzling trees and bushes and the touch of mystery given by the shifting fog.

"I wonder if we shall enjoy Munich half as much as Wiesbaden," said Hope, as they walked in a remote part of the park under the snow-laden trees.

"Do you still think Munich is the best place for us to go?" asked Lois.

"Why, where else should we go?" exclaimed Hope, in some surprise. "We have never had any other plan. It seems the best place in Germany that we can reach now."

"Why do you stick to Germany?" asked Cecil.

"Yes. That is just what I was going to say," said Lois, eagerly. "We seem to think we must be in Germany all winter. It is such a cold, dreary place."

"That sounds like Mrs. Webster," observed Hope. "I do hope, Lois, that you are not changing your mind about things. Are you? I didn't know that you minded cold and dreary places. I thought I was the one whom you all consider foolish about rainy weather. And you know we came to Germany for the sake of the art and the music. When Diana's eyes are better she will need to make up for lost time in looking at pictures."



"She could get pictures in Paris."

"Paris!" Hope stood still in the path and looked at Lois. "What has put Paris into your head?"

"My dear Hope, don't be so tragic. Surely it is not unheard of that an American should want to go to Paris?"

"Why, no. Of course not. But you know we planned to go there later; to go on from Munich in the spring. We can't afford to stay long in Paris. It is ever so much more expensive than Germany."

"I shouldn't wonder if we could make good arrangements there as well as anywhere else," said Lois. "Mrs. Webster and I were talking about it last night. She has been wretched ever since the fright Freddy and Tana gave her, and she wants to get somewhere and have some diversion. She really needs it."

Hope did not reply.

"She would get plenty in Paris," said young Beauchamp, laughing. "We are going there from here, and I wish you would decide to go there instead of to Munich, but I will tell you honestly that the climate is about as beastly in Paris as anywhere in winter. It is raining and cold most of the time."



"Is there any place in Europe where the sun shines in winter?" asked Lois.

"Oh, yes. In Italy or the south of France, you can get all you want, but I believe it has been raining pretty steadily all along the Riviera this year."

"We are thinking of going to the south of France," said Reginald. "It is a long journey, but a very interesting one, and mother thinks I ought to have more sunshine. Hang it! I wish I were more like you, Beauchamp. What is the use of a fellow who is good for nothing half the time?"

It was not often that Reginald's cheerfulness forsook him, or that he mentioned his lack of strength. There was nothing actually the matter, but he had over-studied and had grown very fast, and his physician at home had ordered a year of idleness, and change of air and scene. He would probably be quite well in a year or two, but in the meantime it annoyed him to be watched over and taken care of, although he seldom put his impatience into words.

"I think," said Hope, presently, and speaking more slowly than usual, "I think we shall have to be guided by what Diana needs. Her eyes must be thought of first, and what is good for them. It



doesn't seem to me as if Paris would be the place for her now."

"And, speaking of angels, there she is, away ahead of us," said Reginald. "She and my mother, walking along in the deepest consultation. I wonder what they are up to!"

"They have just come from the oculist's. You know they were going to see him after the review. Your mother is so good to go with Di."

"She is glad to do it, for she is very fond of her."

"It is so fortunate that she is here," said Lois, "for Mrs. Webster is so miserable now, and the long waiting at the doctor's before they could see him always had such a depressing effect on her, among all those patients with bandages on, and weak eyes."

"Poor Mrs. Webster!" said Reginald, dryly. "It is hard on her that Diana should have trouble with her eyes!"

Lois colored, but was silent.

It was dinner time when they reached the Villa Rosa, and the girls had no opportunity for conversation. Hope fancied that Diana was looking somewhat depressed, but she told herself that no doubt it was her own anxious imagination that made her think so. They were all rather silent, for Madame



d'Ormossipoff and Tana made their appearance at table for the first time since the night the children were lost, and her marked hostility toward the American party was quite undisguised. The meal progressed slowly, the various courses of meats and substantial puddings requiring what seemed an unusual amount of time. At last, however, it came to an end, and the girls went at once to their rooms.

"I have something to tell you," said Diana, as she slipped a hand through the arm of each on their way upstairs.

"Shall I tell Mrs. Webster to come, too?" asked Lois.

"Not this time, Lois dear. At least, not quite yet. I would really like to talk to you and Hope alone for a little while."

"She can amuse Freddy," said Hope. "She has asked me to play with him later in the afternoon. It won't hurt her — just for a change."

"Hope, I think you are really horrid about Mrs. Webster," observed Lois, when they were in their rooms and the outer door was shut. "I think she is one of the sweetest women I have ever known. She can't help leaning upon people. It is her nature."



"You might as well say that I can't help getting fearfully cross about her. It is my nature!"

"Well, I agree with you," said Lois, good-naturedly. "It *is* your nature."

"But that doesn't make it any better for other people. I ought to overcome my nature, and if I try to do it, why shouldn't Mrs. Webster try just as hard? And she doesn't."

"How do you know? No one can guess how much other people may be trying to overcome things."

"Very true," said Hope. "For aught I know, Mrs. Webster may be wearing herself out in her efforts not to lean upon me, Hope Conway, with my unfortunately dependable name, but no one would ever suppose that she was. The odd part of it is that she doesn't seem to be as fond of me now as she is of either of you, and yet she comes to me more than she does to you for help in her difficulties and for looking after Freddy. I don't think she cares for me a bit now."

"Perhaps that is the reason you don't like it," said Lois. "When Mrs. Webster does care for any one she is perfectly fascinating and dear."

"We are wasting time in this useless discussion which we have had over and over so many times already," exclaimed Hope, impatiently. "I want to



hear what Diana has to say about her eyes before—before anybody comes to interrupt us.”

“Poor Mrs. Webster, I suppose!” said Lois.

“Come, girls, don’t say anything more about that now, please!” urged Diana. “I do want to tell you something very important. The doctor says that he has done all he can for my eyes; that the chief trouble now is caused by my nervous system, and he wants me to do—what do you think?”

“What?” asked Hope and Lois together.

“Give up going to Munich! I don’t know what you will say to it!”

“I shall not mind it,” cried Lois, with a glance at Hope. “Not a bit!”

“And go where?” asked Hope.

“I scarcely dare tell you, for I don’t see how we can afford it. Either to go to Italy or the south of France, where I can be out of doors all day and do absolutely nothing with my eyes.”

There was silence in the room for at least a minute. Hope’s mind turned to her account book and their letter of credit; that of Lois flew to Paris.

“I see that neither of you like the idea,” continued Diana, “and so I am going to propose something else—something I really think it would be better for me to do. I will go home.”



“Go home! Diana!”

“Yes, I really mean it. I have been nothing but a drag on you ever since we came. All the plans have had to be changed on account of my eyes, and now here comes another complication. It would be much better for me to go home. I can’t look at pictures or do any of the things that I came abroad for, and the doctor says I need sunshine more than anything else. We have plenty of that at home, you know, and it would be much less expensive than to go as far as Italy or the south of France. I can see that Hope thinks it would cost a great deal to do that. If I leave you, you can go on to Munich and—oh, yes, I am sure it will be much better for me to go home.”

“You are perfectly crazy,” said Hope, when Diana paused. “I thought I would let you talk on just to see how far you would go. I thought, Di, you had more common sense! As if we would let you go! As if we wouldn’t arrange to do anything to make your eyes well! Did the doctor tell you that it would be good for you to go home?”

“No-o. He said it would be good for me to have the interest of seeing new places.”

“I thought so. And what kind of a time would Lois and the Websters and I have in Munich



when neither Lois nor Mrs. Webster want to go there?"

"Don't they?"

"Not in the least," said Lois. "I am very glad there is something to make us decide to go somewhere else. What would the doctor say to Paris, Di?"

Diana looked at her in some astonishment. "I don't think Paris would do. He wishes me to be out-of-doors."

"Oh, yes. I forgot. I wonder what Mrs. Webster would think of Italy. Rome might be attractive."

"Do you think we can go as far as Rome?" asked Hope, getting out maps and guide-books. "It seems very far away, and I have an idea that it is very expensive when you get there. The Mannings are going to France."

"Yes," said Diana. "Mrs. Manning told me their plans this morning, and she is very anxious for us to go with them to Hyères. That is not actually on the Riviera, but it is a lovely place about three miles from the Mediterranean, and not as expensive as Nice or Mentone or those places. It is quiet compared to them. There is not so much going on in the way of amusement, but that



doesn't make very much difference to us, does it? Oh, girls, I do feel so dreadfully to think that I am hampering you! I am spoiling your whole trip."

"What perfect nonsense!" said Hope. "We have had a lovely time here, and if we go to France, we shall travel much more than we ever supposed we should; and besides, isn't it a thousand times worse for you than it can possibly be for the rest of us? You have had all the pain and disappointment, and have had to give up so many things that you have longed to see, and yet you have borne it all like a perfect angel."

"Oh, no, I haven't!" said Diana, turning quickly away and going to her little room. "I wish you would go and tell Mrs. Webster about it, Lois, and see what she says."

"Of course she will agree," said Hope. "How could she help it?"

But to the surprise of every one but Lois, Mrs. Webster did not agree. She had set her heart upon going to Paris. She had heard recently that some friends of hers from Baltimore were to be in Paris during the remainder of the winter, and she was anxious to be there, too. She was equally desirous that Lois Putnam should go with her. There was endless discussion, but nothing could



shake Mrs. Webster's determination. She was going to Paris, but she would not go alone. Lois must go with her.

At first it never occurred to Hope and Diana that there was the slightest possibility that Lois would do this. That the three should separate even for a few weeks seemed quite incredible, but it soon became plain that Lois was wavering. For some unknown and inexplicable reason Paris with Mrs. Webster and Freddy seemed to present more attractions than Hyères with her two friends and the Mannings. Hope went to see Mrs. Manning one day to talk it over with her.

"I can't understand Lois," said she. "She seems so different from what she used to be. I am sure it is all owing to Mrs. Webster's influence. If we let her go with her we shall never again have the same old Lois. I am afraid she is getting to care for clothes and gayety, and just having a good time, without regard to anything else. She adores Mrs. Webster so much that she doesn't think of Diana and me and how badly we feel to have her leave us. I feel responsible for her, and I am sure Mrs. Putnam wouldn't like it if she knew what kind of a woman Mrs. Webster really is."

Mrs. Manning was silent for a few moments.



Then she said, "May I speak very plainly to you, Hope?"

"Yes, indeed! I wish you would, for I need advice very much. I am getting all topsy-turvy in my mind."

"Then I shall advise you to let Lois do as she wishes without further opposition. You need not take too much responsibility on your shoulders; you have done what you could to keep her, now let her go. We cannot expect our friends always to do just what we want them to do, nor to be exactly as we would have them. It is often a very fortunate thing that we can't, I think. And, above all, we may as well learn, as soon as we can, to realize people's limitations. Lois is not Diana, and she can't be, and you needn't expect her to give you all that it is in Diana to give you; but she is a very sweet girl, with many good qualities. She needs a little experience of people, and I think you will find, eventually, that she will be more as you would have her because she has had that experience. In the meantime, let her find things out for herself. It isn't unnatural for a girl to want to have a good time."

"But Diana and I are girls, too, and we are going to have a good time," persisted Hope. "I don't want Lois's idea of a good time to be different from ours. I don't want her to slip away from Diana and me."



“No, dear; that is just where the trouble lies,” said Mrs. Manning, gently. “Hope must live the best life she can, but not try to live Lois’s life, too. You have done all you could to make her do what you think is best, and it has had no effect. Now let it drop. It will all come right in the end, I think. Things usually do. Very often I have found that to be the case. I have been worried and anxious about complications and difficulties that have arisen, — and I have had great trials, too, that at the time seemed almost beyond endurance, — but, in looking back, I can see the good they brought. There is great truth in the words: ‘All things work together for good.’ It seems very hard now about Diana’s eyes, but perhaps some day she will understand why she has had the trial and the disappointment. It may have been to lead her to something better. There, my dear, I have preached you quite a sermon! Arthur would tell you that I am very fond of doing it. I wish I could go to Paris myself, to see my dear boy, but that will come later.”

“You are a dear!” said Hope, kissing her. “You have done me ever so much good. I, too, have my limitations, as well as Lois. I must write a book some day, and call it ‘The Limitations of Hope.’”



## CHAPTER TEN.

**H**EIDELBERG had been left behind — Heidelberg with its Castle and its University, its old bridge over the Neckar, and its fine background of mountain. The newly adjusted party of travelers, consisting of Diana and Hope, with Mrs. Manning and Reginald, had stopped here over night, and had explored the picturesque town. The next day came the long journey into Switzerland. It was clear and cold, and as the train climbed higher and higher into the Alps, the scenery became more wild and beautiful, and the air more pure and exhilarating. They stopped at Lausanne and Geneva, and then continued their journey in search of sunshine, for, after the first day or two, a thick mist hid all the magnificent scenery from their view. And then, shortly after leaving Geneva, they crossed the frontier, and found themselves in France.

The first night they spent in Lyons, and the next day went on to Avignon, arriving there at about four o'clock in the afternoon. The sky was an un-



flecked blue, for the sun was shining gloriously; but it was cold, and the mistral was blowing, a strong, tiresome wind which Baedeker calls "the plague of Provence."

"Talk about American cyclones!" said Hope, breathlessly. "I have never felt such a wind as this. The gale that blows through Copley Square in Boston on a February day is a gentle summer zephyr compared to this hurricane."

They had left their luggage at the quaint old-fashioned inn where they had found rooms, and were now setting forth to explore the town. It is a very old place, having been in existence long before the coming of the Romans, who have left so many traces of their occupation of France all through this region. Its walls, for it is one of the few cities around which the walls still stand, are well preserved, and give a most interesting and unique appearance to the city that was the residence of the popes for over seventy years, in the fourteenth century.

The Americans climbed the hill upon the top of which the Papal Palace and the Cathedral stand, side by side. The Palace is now used as a barrack, and as they approached, a troop of French soldiers marched briskly past them and disappeared within the huge pile of buildings which have seen such



changes of fortune. Farther on was the Cathedral, and after they had examined the interior they came out and walked along the *Promenade du Rocher des Doms*, from which they could see the Rhône, with the old towers of Villeneuve on the opposite bank, and, most interesting of all, the ruins of the celebrated *Pont d'Avignon*, the old bridge across the river, only half of which now remains.

"Doesn't it remind you of the old song," said Mrs. Manning, "'*Sur le pont d'Avignon*'? We used to sing it when I was a child."

"So did we," said Hope, "and you have no idea how intensely thrilling it is to me to see the bridge. I think it would have been the mistake of our lives not to have taken this trip. I must go down to the bridge and as far out on it as I can, for I want to be able to say all the rest of my life that I have been '*Sur le pont, sur le pont, sur le pont d'Avignon.*'"

"Suppose we go now," suggested Reginald. "I should like to."

"And I," said Diana. "This is the most fascinating and picturesque place I have ever imagined."

"I think I shall go back to the hotel," said Mrs. Manning. "This wind is almost too much for me. But I don't wish any one to come with me, for I



shall be glad of a chance to rest. You need not hurry back on my account."

They were all holding on to their hats, and found it difficult to keep their footing on the top of the high rock which formed the promenade. They walked down the hill, and then Mrs. Manning left them, and went back to the hotel by the only street which can boast of size or importance in Avignon, while the others pursued their way through little, narrow, ill-smelling lanes, and past small and miserable houses to the river.

In this closely built district they were protected somewhat from the mistral, but when they emerged into the open road that lay along the bank of the Rhône, they were almost swept away by the force of the wind. However, they struggled on, and were able to walk as far as the Chapel of St. Benezet, which was built on the bridge in the fifteenth century. At this point Hope's excitement reached a climax. Forgetting the wind, forgetting the unreliability of modern hat-pins, in her delight at finding herself where she was, she let go her hold of her hat, clapped her hands, and began to sing the old song. A great gust came whistling over the river at this unlucky moment, and away went Hope's hat, pins and all, straight into the path of a



young man who was standing at a short distance from them on the bridge, but whom they had not before noticed.

This young man had been enjoying their conversation, and had also heard Hope's singing, for the wind carried the sound, as well as the hat, directly to him. With a quick movement, he caught the latter, and brought it at once to its owner.

"Here it is!" he said, lifting his own hat, and speaking with a pleasant smile and a look of fun in his eyes. "I am glad I happened to be just where I was."

"I am glad you were!" exclaimed Hope, as she took the hat and pinned it on again. "Thank you, ever so much!" And how nice it is not to have to say, '*Merci, Monsieur!*' You are an American, of course."

"I am, and so are you, I am sure. There is no disguising that fact among ourselves, is there? And I am glad of it, too."

"So am I; and I am ever so much obliged to you for saving my hat. Avignon shops didn't look promising for buying a new one."

"Come, Hope. It is time we went back to the hotel," said Diana. She bowed in a somewhat distant fashion to the stranger. Reginald lifted his



cap, Hope nodded in her most friendly way, and they left the bridge.

The American walked in the other direction, and then, when they had had time to get some distance away, he turned and followed them to the town.

"Two sisters and a brother, I suppose," he said to himself, "though they don't look in the least alike. I wish I might meet them again. Hope! What a charming name. The handsome girl with the dark eyes was rather freezing in her dignity. Perhaps I may run across them again some day, and can make her understand that I am quite harmless."

In the meantime the girls went back to Mrs. Manning, and recounted to her their adventure.

"He was a gentleman," said Hope, "and very good-looking. Tall and broad, and so nice-looking! I should think he was quite old; twenty-eight at least. I should have liked to talk longer to him, but Di put on her *grande dame*, Beacon Street air, and grew at least a head taller than usual, and practically ordered me home."

"You were so intensely friendly, Hope. It is all very well to thank a man pleasantly for a small service, but you!"

"Do you call saving my beloved Knox hat a small



service? I call it a very big one. And I like cordial manners, and, besides, he was a gentleman. It was easy enough to see that, and an American. I am always so glad over here when I see a nice, honest, good, trustworthy, American man, that I feel like marching up to him, shaking him by the hand, and saying, 'Sir, I admire you!' no matter where it may be nor who he is. And I give you fair warning, Di, that if we ever meet the man of the bridge anywhere else in the course of our travels, I shall bow to him in my best manner."

"Hope!"

Hope glanced mischievously at Mrs. Manning. She loved to startle Diana.

In the meantime Reginald was reading his Baedeker. "Avignon is celebrated for something that I bet a sixpence you don't know about," said he. "I'll give a prize of a cake of chocolate to the one who guesses it."

"My dear boy, you are not the only one of the party who studies Baedeker," said Hope. "It was in Avignon that Petrarch first saw Laura, and she died here, and was buried here."

"Good! I didn't think you would get it on the first guess. I'll give you the chocolate — when I buy some."



"Read us what the guide-book says about it, Reggie," said his mother.

"'In 1326 Francesco Petrarca, then twenty-two years of age, visited Avignon, and beheld Laura de Noves, who was in her eighteenth year, at the church of a nunnery. Her beauty impressed the ardent young Italian so profoundly that, although he never received the slightest token of regard from the object of his romantic attachment, he continued throughout his whole lifetime to celebrate her praises in songs and sonnets, and long after Laura's death, in 1348, dedicated many touching lines to her memory.'"

"How perfectly beautiful that was!" said Hope, who was very romantic, although she usually hid it beneath her fun and her sharp speeches. "Just imagine being so beautiful that a man, having once seen you, would love you forever after."

"I would rather he loved me for myself than for my looks," said Diana.

"Oh, I should like to be beautiful," sighed Hope. "I can't imagine anything more delightful than to be absolutely, perfectly beautiful. Now, if I had only been more beautiful, the man on the bridge this afternoon would never forget me. Perhaps he is a poet, like Petrarch. Who knows? And would



forever after dedicate sonnets to the beautiful and hatless Laura."

"Not a bit of it," said Reginald. "He is no poet, but a commonplace man; from New England, probably."

"No New England man is commonplace!" cried Hope.

"Whew!" exclaimed Reginald, and he whistled a few bars of "The Star-spangled Banner." "But to change the subject, which is becoming slightly embarrassing, as I am not a New England man, and am very jealous of your preference for them, who else do you suppose died here besides Petrarch's Laura?"

"John Stuart Mill," replied Hope, as promptly as before; "a mere philosopher, he, and not nearly as interesting as the fascinating Laura."

"Good again!" said Reginald. "You shall have two cakes of chocolate — when I buy it."

"I hope you will soon, for I eat it voraciously. It seems to me that in Europe all my spare *centimes*, *pfennigs*, and *sous* in whatever country I happen to be, all my change in whatever coinage, goes for chocolate; and the chocolate, a good half of it, went to Freddy. Never did I see a child with such a capacity for chocolate. Isn't it odd not to have him



with us, tagging at our heels and keeping us forever on the jump?"

"Hope, what an expression!"

"I knew you wouldn't approve, Di, and if I were at home I should say, 'on the *qui vive*.' Being in France, I shall be very American, and say, 'on the jump.'"

"I wonder how the other half of the party is getting on in Paris?" said Mrs. Manning. "They must be quite settled there by this time."

"Please don't talk about them," said Hope. "I haven't forgiven Lois yet for preferring the Websters to us; and just think what she is missing."

That night, when the girls were in their room, Hope was unusually quiet.

"What are you thinking about?" asked Diana, at last. "You have been in a brown study for the last fifteen minutes."

"I was thinking of how pretty Lois is, and how dear she is, and wishing that she were with us. If she had been on the bridge this afternoon, and if the man on the bridge were a poet, I am sure he would write sonnets to her forever after."

"'If all the ifs were pots and pans,'" quoted Diana. "It is a good thing they are not, and it is also a good thing that Lois wasn't with us if the



result would have been an endless chain of sonnets. I can't imagine a greater waste of time and paper."

Hope turned and looked at Diana. "In spite of your artistic proclivities," said she, "you are the most hopelessly matter-of-fact person I have ever known."

They were to leave Avignon for Marseilles the next day. The morning dawned bright and clear, but the mistral was again in full force, and Mrs. Manning decided to remain quietly at the hotel until it was time to take the train, at a quarter after twelve. The girls and Reginald went for a walk around the outskirts of the town, where they could have a fine view of the ramparts, first leaving their luggage at the station, for it was more convenient for them not to go back to the hotel. They took a long walk, seeing much that was of interest, and then the girls went to the station, while Reginald returned to the hotel for his mother. They agreed that the girls should get into the train for Marseilles, when it came, without waiting for the Mannings, in order to secure a carriage.

"Of course we shall be here in good season," said Reginald, "for mother is always hours ahead of time, but something might detain us, and the train waits here twenty-five minutes. You would better get in when it comes along."



The girls went into the big station, and amused themselves for a time by watching the people. They had their tickets through to Marseilles, so they had nothing to attend to.

"I am glad of it," said Hope. "If there is one thing that I particularly dislike, it is to ask anything of these French railway officials. They sit in seclusion and elegant leisure behind those glass cases, and when you venture to ask them something quite necessary they whisper their replies, and don't seem to like it at all if you don't understand at once, and a murmur in French from behind glass is not easy to catch. However, I expect to be very proficient in the language before we leave the country. It is wonderful how well we get along."

"Suppose we go out and walk up and down the platform," suggested Diana. "Why, there is the train! Do you see? It is marked '*à Marseilles.*' It is here already. Perhaps it starts from here after all, though Reggie thought it came through from Paris. Shall we get in?"

"Why, yes, I think we'd better. We can pick out the very best-looking second-class carriage there is, and be as comfortable as possible. It is very early yet."



They did so, having first asked an official if this were the train for Marseilles, so as to be quite certain, and presently they were established in it with all their bags and wraps. Hope began her study of the guide-book, while Diana gave herself up to dreams of all that she had seen, occasionally interrupted by bits of information from Hope. They soon became absorbed in this, and, as it was so early, they did not yet look for the Mannings, nor give them a thought. Neither did they heed the cry of the guard: "*En voiture, Messieurs! En voiture, Messieurs et Mesdames!*" which is the polite French equivalent for our American "All aboard!" The first thing that aroused them was the slamming of their carriage door, and then, before they had realized what had happened, the train began to move.

The girls stared at each other blankly. Hope was the first to recover her voice. "Where are the Mannings?" she faltered.

"They must have got into another carriage, but it is strange that Reggie didn't find us."

"Very strange; for of course he must have looked for us. Di, perhaps they have missed the train! And yet that isn't like Mrs. Manning. What shall we do? We oughtn't to have got in until they came."



"Of course we oughtn't, but Reggie told us to secure a carriage. Shall we go to Marseilles, or get out somewhere and wait?"

"But they may be on the train, after all," said Hope. "They may have jumped on at the last minute. Perhaps they were detained by something, and got into any carriage they saw. Oh, for a good, open, American train, that we could walk through and look for them! Oh, for an American conductor to speak to! No one will come near us until we reach the next stopping-place, and perhaps not then. What is the next stopping-place? And is not it a mercy that we have our own tickets? Reggie wanted to keep them all, but I thought it was better not. That was certainly a lucky decision."

She had opened her "Cook's Continental Time-Table" while she was speaking, and had begun to study the trains to Marseilles.

"Tarascon is the next stop," said she, "and we wait there a long time. We arrive there at 12.16. It is only a little distance, and we don't leave there until 1.10, so we can look for them then. Of course we shall find them."

"How can we arrive at 12.16, when we didn't leave Avignon until 12.14?"



"That is odd, but it is only one of the oddities of a European time-table, I suppose."

Diana looked at her watch. "But, Hope, it is only a quarter of twelve now!"

"Your watch must be slow," said Hope, as she looked at her own. It showed the same hour. "Both of our watches must be slow. It's funny that both should have lost in exactly the same way. It couldn't be"—she returned to the time-table. "Di!" she exclaimed, growing quite white.

"What now?"

"My dear, there are *two* trains to Marseilles! Look!"

Diana seized the book. Then she drew back. "I can't read fine print, you know. Tell me!"

"One leaves Avignon at 11.34; the other, that comes through from Paris, leaves Avignon at 12.14. The second one is the *rapide*, and gets to Marseilles an hour and a quarter before this one. Stupid idiots that we are, we got into the wrong train! No wonder the Mannings hadn't come, more than half an hour before time. Now what shall we do?"

It was, indeed, a question. They knew that the Mannings were no doubt equally agitated at not finding them, and it was impossible to guess what



they would decide to do under the circumstances. They finally decided to keep on to Marseilles, hoping that their friends would come to the same conclusion.

"We can't go back," said Diana, "or we should certainly miss them, even if there were a train to take us; and we can't get out anywhere and wait, for there is no means of communicating with them and letting them know where we are waiting. In America we could telegraph to the train and to the Avignon station, but we shouldn't know how to manage it here. What is this place?"

They had stopped, backed, and stopped again. On one side was a platform, on the other a motionless and apparently empty train.

"This is Tarascon," said Hope, miserably, "and we have to wait here nearly an hour. If we only could see something!"

"I am thankful there is no one in the carriage with us; it might have been very disagreeable. Let us open the window, Hope, and look up and down the platform. We might see a guard."

They lowered the window with some difficulty and looked up and down the long platform. There was no station on that side, and only a blank wall. Their train seemed to extend for miles in



either direction. There must have been at least thirty carriages.

"I have never seen such a long train in my life," said Hope, drawing in her head. "The station must be on the other side. There isn't a creature in sight."

She resumed her study of the time-table. "We actually have to wait here to let the other train pass! Was there ever anything more maddening? And perhaps the Mannings are in it! Di, I have an idea! Perhaps they will let us get on that train! It stops at Tarascon. At any rate we could try."

"But how shall we get to the station? There seem to be ever so many trains waiting on that side."

"We will go around behind them. Quick! We haven't a moment to lose. See if we can open the door."

They leaned from the window and tried to turn the handle of the carriage door — there was none on the inside. After some difficulty they succeeded in opening the door.

"I was afraid we might be locked in," said Hope. "For small mercies let us be thankful!"

They seized their luggage and hurried along the platform. If it had seemed long to look at, it was





"HE MUST BE AN OFFICIAL," SAID HOPE.







doubly so to traverse laden with bags and umbrellas, and ignorant, as they were, as to what they should find at the other end of it. They found railroad tracks innumerable, which they crossed running. Away on the other side of the tracks was the station. A number of people were standing there, waiting for the Paris-Marseilles express. Among them was a man in uniform.

"He must be an official," said Hope. "We will ask him."

She mustered her best French, and with many "*Monsieur's*" and "*s'il vous plait's*," she explained the situation, and asked if they could get on the other train when it came. The man in uniform was not a railway official, but an army officer. He twirled his little mustache, and replied so rapidly that Hope could not quite understand what he said, but from his manner she guessed that he was impertinent. The color rose in her cheeks as she turned away. Another man in uniform was standing near. She must try again, for the time was going fast; the train was due in four minutes. This effort was more successful, for this man was a railway official. He listened politely enough, but he did not seem inclined to grant their request. He took their tickets and examined them with a dubi-



ous air, turning them over and over, and looking at them on both sides. The army officer sauntered up to the group, and one or two other persons, who all stared curiously at the two young girls. Both Hope and Diana wished with all their hearts that they had never left the seclusion of their slow train on the other side of the station. What should they do? They glanced at each other helplessly. And then suddenly a voice spoke in English.

“Good morning! What is the trouble? Can I do anything for you?”

They turned quickly, and saw the American whom they had met the day before on the bridge at Avignon.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN.

“OH, how glad I am to see you!” cried Hope. “I know you can help us. We want to get on the train for Marseilles that will be here in a few minutes.”

She explained the situation to him in as few words as possible. Already they could hear the sound of the approaching train. Her new friend turned at once to the officials and spoke with an air of authority.

“Without doubt,” said he in French, “their tickets are good for this train. These young ladies made a mistake in leaving Avignon. Their mother and brother are on the *rapide*. You will permit them to join them, Monsieur?”

“*Bien!*” said the man, while the bystanders dispersed as the train came to a halt.

“You would better get in here,” said the American, pointing to a carriage. “It is for ladies only, and is second class. I think your tickets are for that. I will look for your mother and brother. I suppose I



should recognize him," he added somewhat doubtfully.

Hope had been gazing anxiously up and down the line of carriages. "Suppose they are not on it, after all," she whispered to Diana. "What are we to do?"

But just at that minute they saw Reginald in the distance, running up the platform, and they hurried to meet him.

"Well," said he, "of all the unlucky scrapes! But this is better than we hoped for. Here they are, mother, safe and sound! The train is very crowded, so one of you get in here with mother, and I will find seats somewhere else. Don't leave the train again until we reach Marseilles. I am afraid to trust you out of my sight after this."

In the confusion the nameless American had disappeared. Diana got into the carriage with Mrs. Manning, while Hope and Reginald found seats in another, and very soon the train started. Explanations now poured thick and fast. The other passengers in the compartment with Hope and Reginald looked at them with curiosity. They were all French people from the provinces, and they told one another that they had never seen such animated "*Anglaises*."



"We didn't know what to do," said Reginald, "and mother was in a regular pepper-jig. We looked for you everywhere and asked, but what was the use of asking? Then I found out that another train went to Marseilles, so I looked it up, and we decided that you must be on it, so I persuaded mother to come on this and we would certainly find you at Marseilles. She didn't want to leave Avignon. She was sure you had been kidnapped, but I told her it would take a clever Frenchman to kidnap Hope. But how did you ever happen to run across the man we met on the bridge?"

Hope gave him a graphic description of their adventures from the time of their leaving Avignon. "We should be arguing with that official still if the 'Man on the Bridge' hadn't come along. I do like a man who knows how to order people around. I wish, though, that he hadn't disappeared so quickly, for we had not time to thank him. I wish you would look him up, Reggie, and do it. He thinks that you and your mother are our brother and mother. If we only knew his name! I wonder how he got to the Tarascon station."

"He probably left Avignon last night. I dare say we shan't see him again, for no doubt he is doing all these small places along here. I am glad, though,



that he turned up when he did, for it must have been mighty uncomfortable for you with all those French fellows standing around and staring. See here, Hope, I wish after this you would be more careful to keep with us. Don't go off on your own hook as you did this morning."

Hope looked at him, and then she threw back her head and laughed. She had a merry laugh, and their fellow-passengers smiled in sympathy. "You are too delicious! It was you who gave directions this morning, which we followed implicitly. You suggested our waiting at the Avignon station instead of going back to the hotel, and you told us to get into the Marseilles train and secure seats; and I think we were pretty clever to get out of that train and into this."

"Well, so you were."

"I should like to see *you* managing such a close connection! But, Reggie, I wish you would try to find that American. I would really like to thank him."

"Oh, he's all right," said Reginald. "I am not going to leave you, you may be sure of that. It was what any fellow would have done for two damsels in distress."

"But any fellow would like to be thanked, and



this damsel, at least, would like to thank him. Just look in the other compartments of this carriage and see if by any chance he is there."

The train was different from the one they had left, the three compartments of each carriage opening upon a narrow corridor. Reginald did as she requested, but failed to find their nameless friend.

"It is a very long train," said he. "Of course he is in another carriage."

"He has helped me out of two difficulties," said Hope, "and he really ought to be thanked. I wish he would turn up a third time."

They arrived at Marseilles in good season, and very glad they all were that their adventure had ended as it did.

"Fancy our getting here alone and not finding you!" said Diana. "What a vast place this station is!"

They spent but two hours in the great, bustling city, for they were going on to Hyères that night, but it seemed long enough. There were crowds of rough-looking sailors in the streets from all parts of the world, the boulevards were thronged with people, and in front of the many cafés were small tables placed upon the sidewalks, at which sat men and women, conversing volubly and staring at the



passers-by while they partook of refreshment of various kinds.

To American eyes it all seemed very strange. They saw the wonderful harbor crowded with the ships of every nation, and then, after having given all the time that they could spare to the animated and interesting sight, they returned to the station, and took the train for Hyères. It was a beautiful evening, and the mistral having ceased for a time to blow, it seemed like the close of a May day at home. Their journey to the south had brought them with quick transition to days of greater length and of a soft, balmy temperature that seemed very delicious after the bleak German climate. The groves of olive trees, the glimpses of the Mediterranean, so strangely, deeply blue, here and there an old *château* set in a background of the dull green foliage of southern France, the train now plunging into a tunnel of apparently interminable length, then emerging once more into the light and air; rushing past salt marshes and fisheries, and skirting the foot of the mountains which lie so near the coast,—all these things combined to make a scene of rare beauty in the waning light.

It was dark when they arrived at Toulon, where they changed, and shortly afterward they reached



Hyères. There was no moon, and the roads were but dimly lighted, but from the windows of the omnibus in which they drove to the hotel they could partially distinguish the strange shapes of the palm trees, which at Hyères line both sides of every avenue. The party was warmly welcomed by the proprietor, his wife, and all of his assistants.

“They are so cordial,” said Hope, “that it actually gives you a feeling of affection for them. I feel as if I had known them always, and had come to make them a long-promised visit, instead of which, to-morrow morning we shall embark upon a long argument as to terms, haggling over every *sou* and fraction of a *sou*. I wish we might stay in this hotel, but I am afraid it will be too expensive. We shall have to find a *pension*.”

But there are few *pensions* at Hyères, and the proprietor of the Hôtel des Îles d’Hyères had no intention of allowing them to leave him. It was precisely as Hope had predicted: a long, animated conversation, and much difference of opinion as to the true value of the rooms available. A compromise was finally effected, however, and a bargain made, and before nightfall they were established in rooms which were bright and comfortable. Each room had a single bed surmounted by a white-



draped canopy, a chest of drawers, a mirror over the mantelpiece, and an open grate large enough for the moderate wood fire that is considered sufficient to warm a room in southern Europe.

“And, of course,” said Hope, as she looked about and noted these things, “each room has a clock on the mantelpiece that won’t go. The number of stopped clocks in Europe is really amazing; we have had them everywhere. The hotel and *pension* proprietors must buy them cheap by the dozen to use as ornaments only.”

The rooms could only be reached by a weary climb over three flights of stairs, but the wonderful view from the windows atoned for this. On one side, beyond the palm-lined avenue, was the Mediterranean three miles away. On the other, the dark range of hills, and at their feet, and straggling up over one of the hills, the quaint old town. The gardens and the open squares, where beggars lounged in the sun, were near at hand, and at the top of the hill and outlined against the sky were the square turrets of an ancient castle now in ruins.

It was Carnival time when the American party came to Hyères, and Reginald, who went out to explore the town while the others were making the



bargain, came rushing back with a wonderful piece of news.

"There is to be a flower battle this afternoon," said he. "There are great signs everywhere, '*Bataille des Fleurs*.' We must be sure to go. What fun it is here! Aren't you glad you came?"

To this they all agreed eagerly, and when *déjeuner* had been eaten, at twelve o'clock, they sallied forth to see the show. They followed the crowds of people, who were all going in one direction, until they came to a point where two roads met, and here the spectators made a halt. Presently the maskers came trooping along, half a dozen or more together, on their way to the field where the battle was to take place. There were men in false noses and fantastic costumes; some were riding hobby-horses, and there were others in horses' heads; while one who represented a tame bear was led by a keeper. There were groups of gayly dressed girls, there were chariots, and people on horseback; and following them came a motley throng of beggars, peasants, and townspeople, trooping to see the fun.

The crowd became so great that Mrs. Manning and the girls decided to follow it no farther, and turned back, but Reginald kept on, determined to



lose nothing that there was to be seen. The others took a walk, and then returned to the hotel. From the windows of one of their rooms they watched the open square, upon one side of which the hotel stood; and after the show was over the maskers and people thronged back to this part of the town. The girls opened the windows wide, and, hanging far out, they gazed down upon the strange and fascinating scene.

There were old, old peasant women in white caps, bent nearly double, and leaning on sticks; there were maskers, beggars, English people, priests, King Carnival himself on horseback, girls on bicycles, boys in long cloaks, automobiles, donkey-carts, dogs, and open barouches full of people.

And then, strange, sad sight, came a funeral. The priests, four or five abreast, in their white cottas and gorgeous vestments, led the way. Then came the open vehicle that served as hearse, then two little girls behind it, — the chief mourners, alas! — and then a small group of men, all on foot. They came through the crowd, which parted for them, the men raising their hats respectfully, as they do in foreign countries when the dead pass by. Then it closed again behind them, paying no further heed. The little procession walked up a narrow street,



and disappeared over the brow of the hill. It was forgotten. This was Carnival time; why give thought to death? And perhaps last year he who now lay so still was chief among the maskers.

“Imagine such a scene as this at home,” said Hope. “And how they are all talking! Do you hear them? And look! There is Reggie in the thick of it all. What a boy he is! But I should like to be there myself—though, after all, it is almost as much fun to watch it from here. Di, that looks like—yes, I believe it is! Look, Di, quick! Right in the middle of the square just beyond that little donkey-cart! It is he!”

“Who, Hope? Whom are you talking about? Reggie is over on the other side now.”

“I don’t mean Reggie at all. It is the American, the ‘Man on the Bridge.’ I have lost sight of him now. Ah, there he is! He is helping that old peasant woman. She would have been run over. Isn’t he kind?”

“He is always coming to the rescue of females in distress, apparently. How remarkable that he should turn up here, and still more remarkable that you should have discovered him in that throng of people.”

“I wish Reggie might meet him. I do want to



thank him for what he did for us. Do you suppose he is going to stay any length of time at Hyères?"

"My dear child, you might just as well ask me if the mistral will blow to-morrow."

"To that you could safely answer yes, so I will take the same answer to the question I put to you."

"But what difference can it possibly make to us whether he stays or not? We shan't meet him unless he is at this hotel, and at any rate we don't know anything about him."

"We know that he is a gentleman, and a kind man, and I, for my part, want to know him better. I hope he is going to stay at Hyères. There! I see him again now, and there is Reggie coming toward the hotel. They haven't met. What a pity!"

When Reginald came in she begged him to go out again and look for their mysterious friend, but he told her that a needle in a haystack would be an easy game compared to searching in that crowd for a man whom he had seen but twice, and then only for a minute at a time. In looking from the window they did not catch sight of him again, and as it was almost dinner-time the girls reluctantly drew in their heads and went to their rooms to dress.



Their seats at *table d'hôte* were in a row, that of Hope being at the end of the line, with Mrs. Manning on one side of her and an elderly Frenchwoman on the other. There were no other English-speaking people in the house, but the Americans did not regret this, for it gave them an opportunity to improve their French. Hope began valiantly to converse, but she soon found to her chagrin that, though her neighbor seemed able to understand her, she, on her part, could not imagine what was being said to her in reply unless she asked to have it repeated several times. In addition to the fact that the old lady had no teeth, she spoke in a sort of *patois*, and with the upward inflection of the voice that is peculiar to all foreigners, and the combination of these three things made quick comprehension difficult.

"I am going to keep at it, though," said Hope to Mrs. Manning. "I am sure it is a *patois* and will spoil my fine Parisian accent, but I am going to talk to her." Then she turned again to her neighbor. "Madame, did you go to the battle of the flowers?"

"I, Mademoiselle! Why, I am in mourning!"

Hope was so discouraged by this that she made no further effort that night to pursue the conversation,



and she turned her attention to the other people at the table, who were amusing to watch and who afforded the newcomers plenty of entertainment.

The next evening the old lady addressed her first. "Have you walked out to-day?"

"Oh, yes, Madame; I have been out nearly all day."

The lady turned to her daughter, who sat on her other side. "She has been out all day!" This news was so astounding that the daughter leaned forward and stared at Hope.

The next evening this conversation was repeated with a few additions. "Do you not drink wine?"

"No, Madame; I prefer water."

Madame was silent from astonishment. Then she said, with the suppressed elation of one who has made a discovery: "There are three things in which you English differ from the French: you drink water instead of wine; you like the open air; and you walk many *kilomètres* in the day."

"But we are not English, Madame. We are Americans."

"It is all the same thing," replied Madame, with an air of finality.



In a day or two came a letter from Lois. It was addressed to both of the girls, and they took it with them to a neighboring garden, where Hope read it aloud.

“MY DEAREST DEARS: I have been longing to write to you before this, but, except for the postal card that I sent you when we arrived, I have not had a moment to scratch a line. Paris is too perfect! I never imagined anything half so delightful. If only you were both here with us I should be perfectly happy. Di would have so much to interest her that would not hurt her eyes. The shops are enough amusement apart from everything else. I am hoping that you will get tired of Hyères and come here sooner than you planned. We are in a charming *pension* kept by an American. There are some very nice people in the house. Mrs. Webster loves it, and Freddy has some boys to play with, and that allows us more freedom. Doctor Manning came to see us last evening. I shall have to give up calling him ‘Sir Galahad,’ for I very nearly called him that to his face. He is certainly very handsome, and he is perfectly charming. He seemed to enjoy the call, and he has asked us to go to the Louvre and to do one or two other things with him, although he



has not very much time. His hospital work keeps him very much occupied, but once in a while he has an afternoon to himself.

“Mrs. Webster ordered some lovely clothes this morning, and I am having a dinner gown made. We may have some invitations, you know, and in London, too, I shall certainly need it. It is of white gauzy, silky stuff, and is to be touched off in the most charming way with silver, and with a mere suspicion of blue, required, the dressmaker said, by ‘les yeux de Mademoiselle.’ And speaking of eyes, I hope that yours are better, Di darling, and that you are both having a lovely time, dear girls. We miss Hope awfully on the accounts. I get very much muddled, but, as Mrs. Webster says, it doesn’t make so very much difference if they don’t come out just right. In Europe you must spend money or there is no use in coming.

“I had a letter from mother, and I think she does not altogether approve of my leaving you. Of course she does not understand that it was much better for us all to do as we wished. If it had made any real difference to either of you, I should not have left you, but you do not need me and Mrs. Webster does. Be sure to write me all your adventures, and do write often. Give my love to



Mrs. Manning and Reggie, and tell them how glad we were to see Doctor Manning.

“Devotedly yours,”

“LOIS.”

Hope's voice ceased, and she folded up the letter and replaced it in the envelope. Diana was the first to break the silence that followed.

“She seems to be having a very good time.”

“Doing what? Ordering dinner gowns and going to the shops!”

“Well, she likes that.”

“I can't bear to see her growing selfish.”

“You can scarcely call Lois selfish, Hope. Look at her devotion to Mrs. Webster.”

“I know. But somehow that doesn't seem worthy of her. Perhaps, though, this is all jealousy on my part. I suppose I don't want to give Lois up to any other friend, but really I think I shouldn't mind if Mrs. Webster were a different kind of a woman. If she only had ‘a soul above buttons’! Evidently Mrs. Putnam didn't approve of Lois leaving us, but she chose to go, and I suppose it isn't worth while for us to worry about it.”

“I am so sorry about it all,” said Diana; “I feel



as if it were entirely my fault, for we shouldn't have come south for any other reason than my eyes. I blame myself very much."

"You are a dear and provoking idiot," said Hope, "with the most ridiculously exaggerated New England conscience I ever heard of. As if you could help your condition, or the doctor's orders. For my part, I am glad we were obliged to come to this fascinating country, and I am not a bit sorry to exchange Mrs. Webster and Freddy for Mrs. Manning and Reginald. I am glad they miss me on the accounts, if at no other time. Isn't Lois funny? She is so matter-of-fact."

After *déjeuner* that day Mrs. Manning and her three young companions took their coffee in her room as usual, Reginald presiding at the biggin, and they then discussed their plans for the afternoon. It was soon decided by unanimous vote that they should go to La Plage. This is a small resort on the shore of the Mediterranean, and, being only three miles from Hyères, various means are provided for getting there. It is the next station on the railroad, and there is also an omnibus which runs several times a day between the two places.

They decided to go over in the omnibus and



come back by train, unless they wished to walk. It was a charming drive over the hard white roads of Provence. The day was bright and sunny, but the mistral was blowing, and as they approached the sea it grew perceptibly colder. They left the omnibus and walked to the beach. The road ran parallel with the water for some distance, and was lined with villas, half hidden in the depths of foliage. On the other hand was a little row of bath-houses, against a background of dense green trees. The land beyond on either side jutted far out into the water, and out to sea could be seen the faint outline of distant islands.

The Americans stood in the shelter of the bath-houses looking at the view, but the wind was too cold for them to stay there long.

"I never expected to be half frozen when I was standing for the first time on the shores of the Mediterranean," said Mrs. Manning. "It is really icy."

"There is a public garden of some kind here," said Reginald; "perhaps it is more protected there. At any rate we ought to see it."

They walked up the road and entered a large and carefully laid out garden. It was filled with palm trees, orange trees, roses, jonquils, and other



lovely plants in full bloom, and the well-kept paths led through shady ways to one beautiful vista after another. Hope, looking at the ground, gave a sudden shriek and stood still.

"What is it?" exclaimed the others.

"Look! Have you ever seen anything like this? Caterpillars! Millions of odious, horrible, crawling caterpillars!"

Crossing the path was a long, unbroken line of yellow caterpillars marching very slowly, one close behind the other. They climbed a little hill and there disappeared beneath the bushes.

"I am going to count them," said Reginald.

They all stood looking at them, stooping over and quite fascinated by the odd sight. Reginald had reached one hundred and twenty-seven in his count when they were startled by the sound of irrepressible laughter. Standing near and watching them with much amusement was the American of the Avignon bridge. He lifted his hat, bowed, and disappeared among the trees.

Hope turned to Diana. "It was he!" she exclaimed tragically. "He was there, and he has gone!"

"He is a will o' the wisp," said Diana.

"First you see him and then you don't," said



Reginald; "like a conjurer's trick, and like that, warranted to appear in the most unexpected places. Perhaps he will turn up in my pocket. Cheer up, Hope! We'll catch him somewhere yet. Don't you worry."

Hope looked scornfully at the teasing Reggie. "You think you are so smart!" said she. "I only want to thank him. No one else seems to realize all he did for us. Reginald, I wish you had been quick enough to speak to him before he disappeared. Perhaps he is shy or something, and doesn't want to appear pushing."

"He must be 'something,' then, for he wasn't too shy to laugh at us, and we must have looked funny, all stooping over those caterpillars. Perhaps we shall run across him again before we leave La Plage."

But they returned to Hyères without seeing their mysterious fellow-countryman again.



## CHAPTER TWELVE.

“**I** FEEL that we have done the right thing,” said Mrs. Webster, looking about her with an air of satisfaction. “At last we are where we should be, and doing what I, for one, came to Europe to do.”

It was a few days after their arrival in Paris. They were established in a *pension* on a wide and handsome street near *l’Arc de l’Étoile*. It was kept by an American woman, and Mrs. Webster had been advised by friends to go there. It was a large house, the salon filled with gilded furniture and the walls covered with mirrors, and there were electric lights, a lift, and other luxuries which they had failed to find in *pensions* in other places. In short, there was an atmosphere of elegance, of Parisian fine living, that rejoiced Mrs. Webster, and to which Lois was not averse.

“And we have made excellent arrangements,” continued Mrs. Webster; “I doubt if Hope Conway could have done better, or as well. Hope



always worried so about the expenses and the accounts that it made me quite nervous. The less one thinks of those things the better."

"I wish the girls were here," said Lois. "I am sure they would like it. I *wish* they were here."

Mrs. Webster looked annoyed. "I am sorry you are not satisfied," she said, in her sweet, drawling voice.

"Oh, but I am, dear Mrs. Webster!" cried the girl.

"No, you are not. You are not contented to be here only with me. I thought we were going to have such a lovely time together, just you and I and Freddy, and now you are longing for those girls."

"Indeed, I am not," persisted Lois, feeling very much distressed. "I am having a perfect time. I only wanted Diana and Hope to see it and enjoy it with us. You know we three have always done things together, and it seems strange not to have them with us. I should like to have them see Paris, that is all."

"They will see it in time. We had become too large a party. In fact, even before we met the Mannings at Wiesbaden we were too many. Five is a wretched number."



Lois refrained from reminding her that she knew just how many would be in the party before they left America. Mrs. Webster had a way of saying disagreeable things so sweetly that Lois could always pardon them. She was completely captivated by the elder woman. It was one of those cases that are not uncommon. The young girl had long ceased to reason about her attachment; she was blind to her friend's defects of character, her selfishness, her lack of self-reliance, and her obstinacy, which is so often the accompaniment of a weak nature. She was conscious only of Mrs. Webster's great charm of manner, of her pretty, appealing ways, and her air of having never been obliged to look out for herself, of having all her life been cared for, as had been the case.

Thus far on their trip Lois had had no responsibility, for Hope had shouldered it all. Lois had merely enjoyed life, with plenty of money in her pocket and much more in the inexhaustible coffers at home. She had found in their chaperon only a lovable and charming friend, with whom she had many tastes in common. It was rather a relief to Lois to be with some one who did not look upon art and self-improvement as a sort of religion, and who found in trinkets and pretty clothes an amount of



pleasure which no doubt shocked Diana and Hope, but with which she herself was in perfect sympathy.

She was not usually very demonstrative, but now she got up and crossed the room. She knelt down by Mrs. Webster, who was lying on the sofa.

"How can you think that I am not glad to be here just with you?" she said. "You are so sweet and dear, and I know we are going to have a lovely time together."

"*You* are sweet and dear," returned Mrs. Webster, caressing Lois's curly hair with her little delicate hand, "and as pretty as a picture. We must get you some pretty clothes, darling. We will begin to-morrow. I love to choose them. And now, dear, if you will see that Freddy is quite safe and is amused with something, I will rest a little while, so as to be fresh for this evening. I have no doubt that Arthur Manning will come again. Don't let me be disturbed for anything this afternoon, will you? It makes such a difference in my whole day if I get three winks of sleep in the afternoon."

So Lois covered her with a silk blanket, darkened still further the already shaded room, and quietly left her. Her first thought was for Freddy. She found him wandering about the house with nothing to do, and a strong determination to go to his



mother for amusement. Lois persuaded him to go upstairs with her to her room at the top of the house.

"It is rather good fun to look out of my window," said she, "and we will think of something to do."

"Paris is the worst place yet," said Freddy. "Wiesbaden wasn't so bad, because there was skating, and Reggie, and a feller could speak to another feller. Brussels was beastly, but Paris is beastlier. I don't see what there is to see from the window, Lois. Nothing but roofs and things. I want to go out."

"It looks like rain."

"It always looks like rain when it isn't really raining over here."

"I heard a conundrum once about rain," remarked Lois.

"What was it?"

"Well, it wasn't exactly a conundrum, it was a sort of a catch. This was it: It either rains or it doesn't rain. It doesn't rain, does it?"

"No."

"Well, then it rains."

"It doesn't at all, Lois!"

"But you just agreed that it either rains or it doesn't rain. It doesn't rain, therefore it must rain."



"Lois Putnam, I never heard anything so silly! You can't make me believe it's raining when it isn't!"

"It is pretty silly," admitted Lois, going to the window. "Let's give up thinking about it."

"I know a better one than that," said Freddy. "It's about a door, but I can't remember just how it goes. It's something like this: When is a door not a door?"

"When it is a window?" hazarded Lois, who had heard the conundrum from her infancy up, but thought it more politic to feign ignorance.

"No!" laughed Freddy, derisively. "Give it up?"

"Yes."

"When it's a vase."

"A vase? What do you mean?"

"Oh, don't you know? I guess I've got the wrong word. A vase, a bowl, something to hold things. You know, when a door is a little way open. It's a — a — oh, what is that word? It's an awful good conundrum."

"A little way open? Ajar?"

"Yes, that's it! Don't you see? When is a door not a door? When it's a jar. I knew it was something of that kind."

"It reminds me of one that Hope made up once," said Lois. "When is a ball-player a piece of china?"



Freddy guessed in vain. At last he gave it up.

"When he's a pitcher," said Lois.

"My, that's good! Did Hope really make that up herself? She's awful smart, Hope is. She's a great deal smarter than you are, Lois."

"I know it," said Lois, humbly.

"You think a heap of your blue eyes and your yellow hair," went on Freddy, merciless as only a small boy can be, "but you're not in it with Hope for smartness. Why, she can keep everybody laughing for five minutes at a time, when she wants to. I say, Lois, let's go out."

"I don't like to, without your mother."

"Why not? Mother won't care."

"But it is Paris."

"What of that? Why can't you go out in Paris as well as anywhere else?"

Lois found it difficult to explain. "We don't know the way," she said.

"Neither did we know the way in Brussels or Weisbaden or any of the other places when we first got there."

"But there were more of us."

"What of that? And besides, you were always the one who found the way the easiest. There now! that's no excuse. Put on your things, Lois,



do? I'm going anyhow, whether you do or not, and you know mother won't like that."

"Well, we mustn't go very far from here," said Lois, yielding at last, and getting out her hat and jacket and her big fur boa. Freddy watched her as she moved about the room and stood before the mirror.

"You like the way your little yellow curls hang out over your boa, don't you?" he remarked amiably. "You needn't get so red in the face over it."

"I wish you wouldn't make such personal remarks," replied Lois, loftily.

"Why, that was an awfully personal remark I heard Cecil Beauchamp saying to you, and you didn't seem to mind a bit. You smiled and grinned and got pinker and pinker. He said —"

"Never mind what he said. I heard him. Are you ready? For I am."

"He said your eyes —"

"Freddy, unless you stop talking and go and get your hat this instant, I won't go out."

"All right, I'll tell you another time what he said, just so that you won't forget," cried Freddy, jeeringly, as he ran off to get his cap.

"That dreadful child!" sighed Lois. Then she looked again in the mirror, settled her hat more to her satisfaction, and went downstairs.



They had opened the front door and were about to go out, when a young man came up the steps.

"Why, Doctor Manning!" exclaimed Lois. "I am glad to see you, and so glad we did not miss you."

"So am I," said he, as they shook hands. "I have an hour or two to myself this afternoon, and I thought I would take advantage of it. Is Mrs. Webster at home?"

"Yes, but she is lying down. She wanted to rest. However, I will tell her you are here."

"Oh, no, not on any account. And you are just going out, so I won't detain you."

"Oh, please come in," said Lois. "Freddy and I were only going for a little walk because we didn't know what else to do. We shall be quite willing to stay at home."

"Just please talk for yourself, Lois," put in Freddy. "I want to go out. Why can't he go with us?"

"Very true," said Manning; "why can't I? Where are you going?"

"That is just what we don't know. I haven't been out alone before in Paris, and I am not sure that we ought to go."

"It is all right for you to do it up here, but I wouldn't go to the boulevards or down among the shops alone if I were you. It might not be



pleasant." And then they started off at a brisk pace.

They walked in the *Champs Élysées* and found it beautiful, even though the trees were bare and the threatening clouds hung low. The avenue was filled with carriages and the walks with pedestrians, and there was much of interest to be seen.

"I can scarcely realize that I am in Paris," said Lois; "when you have heard all your life about a place, and have read about it, and studied about it, how hard it is to believe that you are actually seeing it with your own eyes."

"I felt so, too, at first. Now I am more accustomed to being here. So much history has centred in Paris that one can't help being tremendously interested. I try to imagine it sometimes as it was in the Revolution, or during the siege, which wasn't so very long ago. And one has the feeling that anything may happen at any time here. Judging from the last hundred years, anything is possible, and that adds to the excitement of life here."

"Do you like being here?"

"Oh, I am very much interested, and I haven't had time to see half or a quarter of what there is to be seen. My work takes most of my time."

"And you like that?"



"My work? Oh, yes!" A new look came into his face as he spoke.

"I suppose it is very interesting, but I can't imagine really liking to see so much suffering."

"But it isn't that, Miss Putnam!" said Arthur, eagerly. "We don't like to see suffering, but we like to think that we are learning to relieve suffering."

"Oh, yes, I know. That is the way Hope and Diana talk. Sometimes they even talk as if they would like to be trained nurses. I cannot understand it."

Manning was conscious of a little feeling of disappointment. The girl with whom he was walking was so pretty, so dainty and attractive. He had admired her very much on board the steamer, and he had been glad when he had learned that it was she who had come to Paris with Mrs. Webster. He was sorry that she did not feel as he did about his profession. Then he laughed at himself. "What difference does it make to me?" he thought. "Why should I care because a girl whom I scarcely know doesn't consider the profession of a surgeon the greatest in the world? Even if she doesn't, there is no reason why we shouldn't become jolly good friends and have a jolly good time together."

"I am awfully glad you are here," he said aloud.



"I don't know many people here, and you are from home; and then you have come so directly from my mother and Reggie that it is almost like seeing them."

They talked about his family for some time, and it made the two feel like old friends. Freddy was so much interested in all that he saw that he did not interrupt the conversation, but skipped along beside them, his eyes very wide open, and allowing little to escape their eager gaze.

"Here we are at the *Place de la Concorde*," said Manning. "There is a hideous humor in the name, for it was here that the guillotine was placed in the Terror, and here that Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette and all the others were executed."

They stood and looked at the great open square so inappropriately named. To their left were the *Jardins des Tuileries*, and beyond the square was a bridge over the Seine.

"Just fancy this place filled with angry, furious faces," he continued, "and the tumbrel rattling up with the victims huddled in it going bravely to their fate. They had been foolish, mistaken, even wicked, some of those thousands that were executed, but they all had courage. Innocent and guilty alike, they all dignified a miserable fate by the way they met death."



"Oh, don't talk about it," said Lois, shuddering. "I hate to think of anything so dreadful. I like to think only of bright, pleasant things, not of revolutions and guillotines."

"So do I," said Manning; "but sometimes you come face to face with horror, and then you have to acknowledge that it exists. You can't be in Paris and not think of the Reign of Terror."

"Oh, there are plenty of other things," said Lois, turning away with a light laugh. "There are shops and pictures and gay people. Where would one look for gayety if not in Paris? Hope would just suit you, for, although she is jolly and full of fun, she loves to ponder over past events, and moralize about life, and all such things. She talks sometimes like a woman of forty, instead of a girl of seventeen, and then in a minute she is funny and amusing again, and you would think she never could be serious."

"Yes, she is very bright," said Arthur. "I like Miss Conway, and Miss Stuart, too. I am sorry about Miss Stuart's eyes. It must be a terrible disappointment to her."

"Oh, yes, it is, and she bears it so beautifully. Sometimes I wonder if she can mind it as much as we think, but of course she does. Di is such a saint."



"She must be very unselfish to keep it all to herself. If she came abroad to see pictures and to study, it must be a terrible disappointment, apart from the physical suffering. My mother has grown very fond of her; she thinks she is remarkable."

"Di is a dear," said Lois, heartily. "You make me feel as if I hadn't half appreciated how brave she has been. I hope the south is going to do her ever so much good."

When they returned to the *pension* Manning found that his leave of absence was almost over and he would barely have time to reach the hospital by the hour at which he was due. He was not a regularly appointed "Interne," but through the influence of certain persons had been granted the privilege of attending one of the great surgeons on his visits, and of studying French hospital work in a manner that would be of great use to him on his return to America. He left his apologies for not going in to see Mrs. Webster, said that he would come again as soon as possible, and hurried away.

"He's a brick," said Freddy, as they entered the house. "When he laughs or smiles it makes a feller feel good all over."

Lois said nothing aloud. "He is Sir Galahad," she was thinking.



They went up to Mrs. Webster's room in the lift. They found that she had enjoyed her nap and was now sitting before the hearth, where a fire of tiny proportions crackled as cheerfully as could be expected from the size of the sticks that composed it. A tray stood on a table beside her, with a kettle and a tea-pot and some cups and saucers. One or two shaded candles lighted the room dimly and shone on the dainty little person who, in a lace-trimmed lavender tea-gown, lay back luxuriously in the big chair.

"Where have you been?" she exclaimed, as Lois and Freddy came in. "I have been very much worried! It is almost dark, and I couldn't imagine what to do. I seem fated to have these frights. I ordered tea without waiting for you, for I really needed something to sustain me. I am afraid it is cold, but perhaps you won't mind that. Where have you been?"

"We have had such a good time," said Lois, peering into the tea-pot. "We have been taking a long walk with Doctor Manning."

"He's a brick," said Freddy, possessing himself of a slice of bread and butter. "He's almost as jolly as Reggie."

"Doctor Manning!" exclaimed Mrs. Webster,



removing her feet from the footstool on which they had been resting and sitting up very straight.

"Where did you meet him?"

"He came here. He got here just as we were going out of the door, so he went to walk with us. We went to the *Champs Élysées* and —"

"But why did you not tell me he was here?" interrupted Mrs. Webster. "You knew how anxious I was to see him."

"But you told me particularly that you didn't wish to be disturbed, Mrs. Webster! You gave me strict orders, you know; and when I told Doctor Manning that you were lying down, he wouldn't let me come and tell you."

"I never supposed that he would come in the afternoon, for he said that he was apt to be busy all day. You might have known, Lois, that I would have made every effort to see him. And why were you going out? You didn't tell me that you thought of doing it."

"I didn't think of it when I left you, but Freddy wanted to go, and there was nothing for him to do in the house."

Lois felt very much disturbed. The pleasure of the walk was rapidly being blotted out. She could see that Mrs. Webster was annoyed, and it seemed



to her that she was very unreasonable. She said nothing, and busied herself with filling the kettle with cold water and lighting the lamp under it. It would take a long time to boil, but she wished for some tea. There was silence for a few minutes, Freddy being too much engaged with his bread and butter to speak.

"Is he coming soon again?" asked Mrs. Webster, presently.

"Oh, yes, very soon."

Again there was silence.

"That bread and butter was mighty good," observed Freddy. "I wish there was some more."

"Why, Freddy, is it all gone?" cried Lois.

"Every crumb."

"I think you might have left one piece for me."

"Why didn't you pitch in and take some? I thought you didn't want any, you were so slow."

"But you knew I was waiting for the kettle to boil."

"Please don't quarrel over a bit of bread!" exclaimed Mrs. Webster, irritably. "Surely, Lois, you don't mind letting that poor child have all he needs. There are some crackers in the box on the other table. Take those if you are so starving."



Then she jumped up, in one of the changes of mood that were so bewildering, and threw her arms around Lois. "Forgive me, darling, for being so cross! It was a shame that I left no tea for you, but I was feeling so lonely, and I was so wretched with you both away, and so worried! You must never leave me alone again in Paris. I am glad you had the walk, but it was quite too dull for me here without you."

She was so gentle and affectionate, and her powers of fascination for Lois were so great, that the girl, whose irritability never lasted long, was immediately pacified. She acknowledged that it had been hard for Mrs. Webster to spend the afternoon alone, and pouring some luke-warm water over the tea-leaves that had been used before, she drank the dose contentedly, shared the crackers with the still ravenous Freddy, and proceeded to recount their experiences to Mrs. Webster. Harmony was soon completely restored, and Lois was just about to go to her room to dress for dinner, when some one knocked on the door. It proved to be a maid with letters.

"I thought the American mail must be in," said Lois. "Three steamers were due, and I was sure they were bringing something for us. Here is one



for you, Mrs Webster, and there are actually four for me. How very exciting! I know whom they are all from, and I mean to keep them to read this evening."

"Only one for me," said Mrs. Webster, discontentedly, "and not one that I wanted at all! I am sure I don't know whom it is from; I never saw the handwriting before, and it looks like a business letter. I dislike business letters extremely. They are sure to be unpleasant. No doubt this is to tell me that something isn't going to pay a dividend, or some other equally depressing thing."

She opened the letter with languid indifference, and her eyes travelled down the large typewritten page. Then suddenly she sprang to her feet, almost upsetting the table with the tea-tray as she did so.

"Lois! Freddy!" she cried joyously. "What do you think has happened? My dear children, come and support me! I feel positively faint."

"What is it, dear Mrs. Webster?" asked Lois, anxiously. "Is it bad news?"

"Bad! No indeed! It is the best of news. My great-uncle Benjamin is dead."

Lois dropped the arm with which she was holding her and moved back. She looked at Mrs. Webster with a surprised and troubled gaze.



"Your uncle is dead and you are *glad*?" she said, slowly.

"Oh, my dear child, don't be tragic! I haven't seen him since I was a little child. He lived away out West and wouldn't have anything to do with anybody, and every one supposed that all he had would go to charity, but it hasn't! It hasn't! He has left it all to my cousins and me, and now I am a rich woman! Freddy, come and kiss me, you little darling! What shall mother buy you to-morrow?"

"An automobile," replied Freddy, promptly.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN.

THEN ensued a period of shopping that surpassed anything that Lois had yet known. There seemed to be no limit to Mrs. Webster's powers of spending. Freddy was given his automobile — not one large enough for him to ride in himself, as he had at first demanded, but a fascinating toy which could be wound up to travel about the room, and which afforded him endless amusement. They rode in the real ones, hired by the hour, and every afternoon when the weather was fine they drove in the Bois; fortunately for Mrs. Webster's newly filled purse, it very often rained or snowed. The weather was that of the usual European winter, but, cheered by her unexpected legacy, Mrs. Webster was for once indifferent to the clouds.

They tasted of every form of amusement that was open to them; they gave little afternoon teas, and went to those of their friends, for there were many Americans in Paris whom Mrs. Webster



knew, and they also made acquaintances in the English colony. In short, as Lois wrote to her mother in Hazelmere and to her friends at Hyères, she was "having the best time I ever had in my life."

Arthur Manning came as often as he could to see them, but he was too much occupied for frequent calls, and as he usually found others there also, he did not see as much of Lois as he would have liked. Cecil Beauchamp, whom they had known in Wiesbaden, was a constant visitor, for he also was spending the latter part of the winter in Paris, and having met them one day in the street, he had passed much of his time with them since. Freddy alone of the three failed to find Paris attractive. He was supplied with all sorts of toys and games, he had more books than he could read, and he was allowed an unlimited amount of pocket money, but all these pleasures did not suffice to make Freddy happy. His one desire was for companions of his own age.

"What's the use of a feller having games," he demanded, "if there ain't another feller to play 'em with? Anyhow, I hate old house games. I wish I was home! If I was home, I'd be having a jolly old time. There'd be snow, and we'd be building forts and snow men and everything. We'd be skating.



We'd be doing nice things at school. Wish I'd never come! Other fellers don't come. There isn't another American boy in Paris, and it shows their sense. When I once get back, you don't ever catch me coming abroad again, you bet!"

"It is strange that there are no boys among all the families we know here," sighed Mrs. Webster. "They either have daughters who are at school, or no children with them at all. Why is it?"

"I suppose those who have sons stay at home on their account," said Louis, "or else they leave them at boarding-school."

"That is just what I intended doing with Freddy, but, you know, he simply would not be left. I had made every arrangement, and even paid part of his tuition money, which I was obliged to forfeit. So, Freddy, it is really your own fault, and you will have to bear the consequences. I am sorry those nice English boys didn't stay longer."

"Oh, I'm not," said Freddy; "I got awful tired arguing with 'em. They like kings and queens and things, and they wouldn't say the President of the United States was the greatest man in the world. If they'd stayed another day, we'd have had a fight about that, but they had to go. We had it all arranged. We were going to have a duel, the way



they do in France, with seconds and choice of weapons and everything, and then they found they had to go off sooner than they thought to Italy. It was a mean shame we couldn't do it."

"My dear child!" exclaimed his mother, "where did you learn so much about duelling?"

"Oh, they knew about it and so did I. There were three of them, you know, and the one that was the same size as me was going to fight me, and the biggest one was going to be my second, and the littlest one the other feller's. The big one said he didn't mind being on my side, for he thought I was plucky, and he liked to see fair play, and there was only one Yankee against three Britishers."

"That was very nice of him," said Lois, "but I think American and English boys ought to have something better to do than fight duels. It isn't done in either England or America."

"Well, we were in Paris, and so we thought we'd do as the French do for a change. What shall I do now, mother?"

"You can come with us. We are going to the dressmaker's, and then do a little shopping."

"Don't want to! I hate dressmakers and shopping. I'd rather stay here" — he stopped abruptly. In his thoughts he added, "I know what I'll do."



It was a plan that had been hovering in his thoughts for days, half defined, and of almost too daring a nature to be seriously considered. It now sprang into shape and possessed him. It was the one thing of all others that he would do this morning, but it must be carefully concealed.

His mother supplied him with books, told him where he might find some chocolate if he were hungry before they returned for *déjeuner* at twelve, and left him.

"Dear boy," she said as they drove away; "he is so good! It is certainly very dull for him here. I will stay at home with him this afternoon; I have this wretched cold, and I really need a little rest." Then she dismissed him from her mind, which at present had little room for anything but her new gowns.

Freddy, left to himself, prepared at once for action. He was not naturally a deceitful boy; on the contrary, he was honest. He spoke the truth, he scorned cheating at games, he always owned up bravely to any wrongdoing — after it was over; but he had acquired the habit of making plans to accomplish some desired end without consulting his mother. She was always so anxious about him, so nervous lest he should come to some harm, that she



was apt to object to his doing things that it is perfectly natural for all boys to wish to do. This method of bringing up the boy could have but one of two results: either he would become an entirely spoiled and unattractive lad of the "Miss Nancy" type, or he would go to the other extreme and take pleasure in terrifying and outwitting his mother. Freddy was in danger of reaching the latter alternative. He was a bright boy, his mind active beyond his years, and his body full of the restless energy that belongs to all healthy boys. He knew perfectly well that his mother exaggerated possible dangers, and alarmed herself needlessly about small matters, and so he grew reckless and to feel that it was quite proper for him to attempt any adventure that happened to occur to him.

For days past he had been possessed with the desire to visit a hospital. This was quite unlike his usual propensities, but he had formed a strong attachment to Doctor Manning. Freddy's affections went deeper than one would have supposed, and Reginald Manning was his particular idol. Arthur was Reggie's brother, and he liked him at first for that reason and very soon for his own sake. He had heard the young surgeon speak of his hospital work, and he felt instinctively how much it meant



to him. He at once determined to be a surgeon himself. All of his former ambitions, even that of being President, faded away, and he now only awaited an opportunity for asking Doctor Manning how he should set to work to add "M.D." to his name.

His favorite game lately had been to play that he was a physician. He had two or three bottles filled with water with which he dosed imaginary patients, and some small boxes in which little lumps of bread masqueraded as pills, but this play soon became monotonous. It seemed to him that there must be labor of a more exciting nature connected with the profession than the giving of pills, if Doctor Manning found it so absorbing, and upon reasoning the matter out in his busy little brain, Freddy decided that the interest probably centred in hospitals; therefore to visit a hospital and see for himself what was done there became his chief desire.

He had at first intended to ask Doctor Manning to take him there, but Arthur had not called since this idea occurred to the boy; and now came this morning of leisure and opportunity. His mother and Lois had gone out, and it would probably be hours before they returned. He had nothing to do; he would go to the hospital and ask for Doctor



Manning. Nothing could be more simple and more unobjectionable; even his mother would not mind this. She did not like to have him go out alone, to be sure, except in the immediate neighborhood of the *pension*, but probably the hospital was not so very far away. He knew that its name was *L'Hôpital Saint Pierre*, that it was on the *Rue Blanche*. He opened Baedeker's "Paris" and hunted up the *Rue Blanche*. He understood perfectly how to look for the name of a street in the index and then to find the locality that it was in on the map. He had always enjoyed studying the maps of cities in the guide-books, and one of his favorite amusements during these months of travel had been to take long imaginary walks on paper, lying on the floor with a map spread out before him and his heels kicking the air.

He soon found the dark, oblong mark that designated *L'Hôpital Saint Pierre*. He then put one of Doctor Manning's visiting cards in his pocket, having first laboriously printed upon it the name of the hospital and the street. "In case I have to ask somebody and they're all too stupid to understand me," he said to himself, as he put on his coat and his cap and his best gloves.

"Doctor Manning always looks so swell when he



comes here that I'll wear 'em, but gloves are an awful bother."

He thought of taking Baedeker with him in order to find his way more readily. "No, I guess I won't," he said to himself. "That old red cover would give me away and everybody would know I wasn't French. I'll tear out the map and stuff it into my pocket, and if I lose my way I'll go into some shop and look at it." So he tore out the map, left the little red book lying open on the floor, and departed.

At first his course was simple enough. He walked down one of the broad avenues that lead from the *Place de l'Étoile* with the *sang froid* of the born Parisian, and soon found the street by which he was to leave this avenue and which led to the *quartier* in which the hospital was situated. This street was more crowded than the avenue he had left, and ended in a great open square to which various other streets also led. This square was filled with carriages, omnibuses, electric trams, automobiles, people walking and on horseback,—in short, it was a scene which only Paris can show, bewildering, fascinating, and dangerous, as even the boldest must admit.

Freddy paused on the corner to find an opportunity for crossing, and then lingered to watch the



swiftly moving vehicles. He walked a little way, and by so doing lost his bearings. He did not know which way he ought to go to find the *Rue Blanche*, and he wandered about looking at the signs on the streets that were near at hand without discovering it. He remembered his map, but he hesitated to produce it and study it in public; he fancied that the passers-by would notice and laugh at his ignorance. Finally he concluded to ask some one. A man stood near whom he took to be the equivalent of an American policeman, for he wore an air of authority and a uniform, so Freddy walked up to him.

"*Où est la Rue Blanche?*" he asked in halting French.

The man glanced down at the small figure and then waved his hand vaguely across the Place. "*C'est là,*" he replied, and turned his attention to something else.

Freddy was not at all sure of the direction, and he thought that as long as he was asking one question he might just as well add another.

"*L'Hôpital Saint Pierre?*" he inquired; "*où est l'Hôpital Saint Pierre?*"

There must have been something quite wrong with his French, he thought, for the man did not



pay the slightest attention to him, so he searched his pockets and finally produced Doctor Manning's card.

"*Monsieur*," said he, "I want — *je désire* — to find — *trouver l'Hôpital Saint Pierre, Rue Blanche.*"

"*C'est là, je t'ai dit cent fois !*" cried the man, irascibly, and continued to pour forth a torrent of French, waving his hand as he had done before.

The way seemed to lead across the very thickest part of the maelstrom of vehicles that whirled through the Place; there was nothing to do but to set forth by that route if Freddy wished to reach the hospital. He thought of his mother, and wondered what she would say if she could see him now. He concluded that the safest plan would be to run; he was very quick, and he could dodge the carriages. Tightly clutching the card in one hand while he settled his cap more firmly on his head with the other, he started on his perilous path.

There was a "safety island" in the centre of this turbulent sea of vehicles where pedestrians could pause for breath and where the omnibuses stopped for passengers. Freddy arrived there without mishap, but, elated with having accomplished half the trip, he did not linger long. Again he set forth, this time more recklessly than before, for success



had turned his head. Forgetting that there were a dozen ways in which he ought to look, he dashed blindly on. The warning "whoop" of the driver of a *fiacre* failed to reach his ears, and in another moment he was knocked down. To all who chanced to see the incident it seemed as if the end must have come.

They picked him up and carried him to the pavement. One leg hung limp and helpless, and there was a cut on his forehead from which the blood was flowing, but he had not altogether lost consciousness. His hand still held the card with Arthur Manning's name upon it, and when he opened his eyes and looked up into the kind faces that were bending over him, while friendly hands bound up his forehead, he said in English, "I'm Freddy Webster."

They were all French people who surrounded him, and it happened that not one of them spoke English. Then some one saw the card in his hand and, taking it, read the address, "*L'Hôpital Saint Pierre, la Rue Blanche.*"

"Yes," said Freddy, feebly, "*où est la Rue Blanche?* Take me there." And then he fainted.

"It is in the very next street!" they exclaimed; "of course, the hospital! What could be better? Perhaps the little one has friends there, and was



on his way to call upon them. To the hospital immediately!"

And as it was but a few steps and he so small and light of weight, one of the men carried him tenderly in his arms; and so Freddy entered for the first time the hospital that he had so longed to see.

It was late in the morning when Mrs. Webster and Lois Putnam got into the waiting cab and gave the order "home." They had accomplished so much that Mrs. Webster, in spite of being very tired, was in excellent spirits.

"We will take a good rest after *déjeuner*," said she, "and then be ready for our friends when they drop in at five o'clock. The Allens are coming, and I think Cecil Beauchamp will if he does not go out of town; and it is about time for Arthur Manning to come again. We haven't seen him for some time. I told Freddy I would spend the afternoon with him, but I am so tired that perhaps you will take him off my hands for a little while, Lois dear. You and he might take a drive in one of those cheap *fiacres*. However, I don't suppose I ought to let you go alone. You can play a game with him, Lois, up in your room until I have had my nap. Dear boy! I wonder how he has been amusing



himself this morning. He deserves a nice afternoon for having been so good about staying alone. You might go to some of the gardens; the one where they have the animals. Perhaps Cecil Beauchamp would come and go with you and then come back for tea. We will telegraph him."

"But I am tired, too," said Lois.

She was leaning back in her corner of the cab. The morning had been fatiguing, and she was growing just a little weary of planning costumes and watching the manipulations of the dressmakers. She had been thinking of Hope and Diana, and wondering what they were doing; if the sun were shining at Hyères; and flitting hazily through her mind, well in the background and without definite shape until Mrs. Webster herself put it into words, had been the thought that Arthur Manning had not been to see them for a long time.

At first he had been very friendly, and had come whenever he could find time, but of late he seemed to have lost interest in them. To be sure there had been many others present whenever he had called, and the conversation had been general, which no doubt he had found unsatisfactory; that, perhaps, accounted for his absence. Lois wished that she could find some means of letting him know that



they expected to be at home, and probably alone, that evening. She wished that Mrs. Webster had suggested telegraphing to him instead of to Cecil Beauchamp to go to walk with them, but no doubt he would be too busy to come. The one walk which she and Freddy had taken with him alone, soon after their arrival in Paris, stood out in her memory as one of the pleasantest things that she had done since their arrival. It was because he was an American, she supposed, and because he belonged to Mrs. Manning and Reginald, that she liked him so much.

"I am very tired," she said again.

"Perhaps you *are* tired, Lois," said Mrs. Webster, "but, my dear, you can't possibly be as tired as I am. You are so strong, you know; you have no cold, as I have. The only wonder is that I can go about as much as I do. The Paris climate at this season is certainly atrocious." The cab stopped in front of the *pension*. "You pay him, Lois; you manage it better than I do."

She put her purse into the girl's hand. Then she glanced up at the house. "I wonder where the dear boy is," said she; "I don't see him at the windows."

They entered the lift, Mrs. Webster going as far



as the second *étage*, while Lois continued on to her room at the top of the house.

“ I am tired,” she said to herself; “ I really believe I have had about enough of this sort of life. I really believe I am sorry that I ever left the girls. They seem to be having such a good time, going on excursions, and sitting out of doors, and seeing strange, foreign sights. Paris might be New York, or Brussels, or any other big city, so far as we are concerned. I like the shops, but I didn’t suppose that Mrs. Webster would be so entirely devoted to them, and not go to any of the interesting buildings and other places. She says we can keep that for the spring when the girls are here; but they don’t expect to spend much time in Paris, on account of the money.”

She sat down and, leaning back in her chair, sighed wearily. “ Heigh-ho! I don’t feel a bit like amusing Freddy this afternoon, or going out with Cecil Beauchamp. He is very nice, but I feel more like talking to—one of my own countrymen. I believe I will strike about taking care of Freddy, as Hope would say. Dear old Hope! I wish I could see her dear, changeable face, and listen to her chattering! She always has something to say and, except when she is worrying over the accounts, she



is always so cheerful. And Diana — oh, if I could only see my dear, dearest Di! Why, I really believe I am homesick for the girls."

She turned her head and gazed dejectedly out of the window at the roofs and chimney-pots, and just at that moment there was a hasty knock at the door. Without waiting for a reply it was burst open, and Mrs. Webster came in.

"He is here, of course."

"No, he isn't."

"Not here? Why, Lois, where is he, then?"

"I am sure I don't know. I have just come in, you know. Probably he is in the salon, or at the table. We are late, and he always gets there first; he has such an appetite."

"It is quite natural that he should have an appetite — a growing boy! I am really surprised at you, Lois." The door closed again, and Lois was alone.

"I am surprised at myself," she thought, "but I am tired of these continual frights about Freddy. If Mrs. Webster would stay with him more she would not be frightened so often. How many times since we sailed from New York have we lost Freddy and found him again? He has nine lives, and I am not going to be worried, even if he doesn't turn



up for an hour. I am too tired." And this extreme irritability in the usually placid Lois proved that she was very tired indeed.

She made ready for luncheon, and was about to go down to join Mrs. Webster, when again the door was opened hastily; this time without the preliminary knock. Mrs. Webster's face was white, and wore what Hope called its "lost boy expression."

"Lois, he is nowhere in the house!"

"Oh, he must be, Mrs. Webster! He is hiding; I dare say he is under my bed." She stooped and looked under it.

"I tell you he is not in the house!" cried the mother. "The *concierge* saw him go out, and he has never come back! And, Lois, he has left the Paris Baedeker lying on the floor with one of the maps torn out. Oh, Lois, Lois, he has gone out alone in Paris, and something has happened to him! I am absolutely sure that something has happened."



## CHAPTER FOURTEEN.

IT was soon established beyond a doubt that Freddy had gone alone to walk and had not returned. When this had occurred in Wiesbaden Mrs. Webster was almost beside herself with fright, and Wiesbaden was a small city, German, orderly, and free from crowds. To know that he was wandering in Paris, with but little knowledge of the language, perhaps having lost his way on one of the thronged boulevards, perhaps in the Latin Quarter, or even a worse locality, rendered his mother absolutely powerless to move or to decide what would be the best course to pursue. She was not a woman who could rise to an emergency.

Lois therefore took command. She also realized the gravity of the situation, for she knew only too well the recklessness of Freddy when crossing the streets, and his superb confidence in himself, which had so often before led him into danger. She also feared that he had met with some accident, but she hid this from his mother, who was already perfectly convinced that it was the case.



"He may have gone farther than he intended and it is taking him a good while to come back," said Lois; "you know we all make mistakes. I hope to see him come in at any minute, dear Mrs. Webster. In the meantime you must have something to eat. We will have it brought up to your room."

"Lois, you are perfectly heartless! How can you think of eating when Freddy is lost?"

But Lois quietly persisted in her ministrations, and Mrs. Webster was finally prevailed upon to take some food.

"You said you were going to telegraph to Cecil Beauchamp to come this afternoon," said she, presently. "Suppose we do so. Of course Freddy will be here by the time he gets here, and then we can go out if he likes. At any rate, it would be nice to have Mr. Beauchamp come — I must have some one to ask advice of," she added to herself; "some one besides these people in the house, and one who knows what he is. I wish I could see Doctor Manning."

Mrs. Webster was crying on the sofa. "Send for him, then," she sobbed; "but I don't see how you can think of taking a walk when my boy is perhaps — perhaps — oh, Lois, I am so afraid he has been run over, and how should we ever find him if he has?"



It was what Lois herself feared. She sat down and wrote the telegram to Cecil Beauchamp. "I believe I will send for Ar — for Doctor Manning, too," she thought. "I won't tell Mrs. Webster. He knows Paris so well, and he is so — well, he is a doctor, and so he knows how to help people."

Then she wrote: "We need your advice. Please come as soon as possible. Lois Putnam." She left the room and gave the two telegrams to a messenger to take at once to the nearest telegraph bureau. As soon as he had gone she wished that she could recall the one she had sent to Arthur.

"What will he think of me?" she said to herself. "Even Mrs. Webster didn't ask to have him come, and why should I? Very likely Freddy will get back before either of them come, and then how absurd it will seem. I wish I hadn't done it!"

But the hours crept by and Freddy did not come, neither did Cecil Beauchamp nor Arthur Manning. Mrs. Webster walked the floor wringing her hands, or cast herself upon the sofa, sobbing miserably. Lois was frightened about her condition, as well as about Freddy. She longed for Diana, whose calm, quiet ways could always soothe their chaperon — they had been through so many of these experiences.



She longed for Hope, who always knew just what to do in an emergency and who was so quick in her decisions. Lois felt as if they were losing time, and then again she could not help suspecting that the excitement might all be for nothing, as it had been so many times before where Freddy was concerned. It was quite possible that he was safe and well.

There was no one in the house whom she cared to consult. Mrs. Atkinson, with whom they boarded, had gone out of town for the day, and most of the other people were out. If Arthur Manning would only come! She walked in desperation to the window, as she had done fifty times already. Presently she heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs coming swiftly over the asphalt. She had been deceived by this sound again and again, and had hastened to the window only to see the carriage roll by. This time it stopped. The door of the cab opened and — was it — could it be? Yes, it was! She turned to Mrs. Webster.

“Here is Doctor Manning,” she said quietly. “Now we are all right.”

“All right!” cried Mrs. Webster. “All right when Freddy is gone?”

“But he will find him. I am quite sure that Doctor Manning will find him.”



"Go down to him and bring him right up; don't linger an instant, will you? Let him come to me at once."

Lois left the room and went to the door of the elevator; when it came up, Doctor Manning was in it.

"I asked to be brought up to Mrs. Webster's room," said he.

"You got my telegram?" asked Lois. "I am so glad you could come."

"No, I have had no telegram. I came to tell you about Freddy."

"Do you know where he is?"

"Yes; he was brought into the hospital. Don't look so white! He isn't going to die. I was not there, but they sent for me. He is hurt, but he will come out of it all right. It seems that he had my card in his hand when he was run over, and they brought him there. It was odd, wasn't it? There! Do you feel a little better?"

He had taken her hand when he met her, and unconsciously he had held it. She was quite worn out with her anxiety, added to the fatigue of the morning, and his strong, warm grasp seemed to put new strength into her.

"How shall we ever tell his mother?" she asked, looking up into the young man's face. It was full



of sympathy and kindness; he knew without a word from her of all that she had been through.

"I will tell her," said he; "don't worry any more. It is so much better than it might have been. Just think what good luck it was to have him brought to *L'Hôpital Saint Pierre*, of all others."

Then they went to Mrs. Webster's room.

"We have found your boy," said Arthur, cheerfully.

Mrs. Webster sprang from the sofa. "Where is he?" she cried. "Freddy dear, are you hiding? Come quickly to mother."

"He is not here, Mrs. Webster, but he is in good hands." And then quietly and gently he told her about it.

Lois never forgot in after years the days that followed. At first Mrs. Webster, nerving herself for the effort, insisted upon spending much of her time with Freddy, and she went daily with Lois to the hospital. His leg was broken, and he was a good deal bruised; his escape from instant death had been little short of a miracle. After the effect of the nervous shock passed off he improved rapidly, but it was thought better to keep him at the hospital, rather than to remove him to the *pension*. He was comfortable there, the nurses and surgeons were



very kind to him, and he seemed to derive a certain satisfaction from the fact that he was in a hospital.

"You see, I wanted to know all about one," said he to Doctor Manning, "and I couldn't have managed it better, could I? I wish I were in one of the big wards, though, instead of in this little room by myself, so that I could see something."

The doctor looked at the little fellow lying on the high, narrow bed, with his head bound up and his leg in splints.

"If you had asked me, we might have arranged to have you see the hospital in another way," said he; "but I am glad you are satisfied."

It was only when his mother came that Freddy grew restless and impatient. He asked her for the most impossible things, all of which she promised to grant. She fussed over him and petted him, and when the nurse asserted her authority, and would not allow him to eat the candy Mrs. Webster had brought to him, she wept with indignation and disappointment. Naturally, this had a bad effect upon Freddy. The doctor forbade further visits, ordering the patient to have complete rest, and his mother was obliged to stay at home. Then she broke down herself; the cold that had been lingering so long became worse, and she was unable to leave her



room. Lois was in constant attendance upon her, and Doctor Manning came every day, and often twice a day, not only to cheer up the invalid with his reports of Freddy, but to help Lois. The girl was showing the effect of the demands made upon her.

Cecil Beauchamp, who had been out of town the day of Freddy's accident, and therefore did not receive the telegram until too late to be of use, also came very often, and other friends did all they could to help them; but Mrs. Webster, unable to go out herself, was unwilling that Lois should leave her. Lois, therefore, was obliged to decline all invitations, and if she went to the salon for ten or fifteen minutes to receive the friends who called, she returned always to find Mrs. Webster in tears, complaining bitterly of her loneliness and her misfortunes. Cecil Beauchamp discovered this one day, and his indignation was so great that he expressed himself very forcibly to Lois, and then, chancing to meet Arthur Manning as he left the house, he again freed his mind.

"If you are their medical man, you ought to do something," said he, "unless you are trying to get another patient on your hands. My word! the woman's a monster of selfishness. Fancy keeping



a young girl shut up like that! It's an outrage, isn't it?"

To which Manning agreed, for he had been thinking the same thing himself.

One afternoon, soon after this conversation with Beauchamp, the doctor came in earlier than usual, and after a little professional talk with Mrs. Webster, he turned to Lois. "Have you been out to-day, Miss Putnam?"

"No; I haven't been out since the day before yesterday."

"I thought so. You look as if you hadn't had enough fresh air. Why don't you put on your hat and come with me now? I have some leisure this afternoon. You will spare her for a couple of hours, won't you, Mrs. Webster?"

"Oh, I shall be so frightfully lonely," said Mrs. Webster.

"Oh, no, you won't, I am sure. Please, Miss Putnam, go and get ready."

Although he was so young in years as well as in his profession, he had the professional air of expecting obedience. Lois folded up the embroidery with which she had been trying to occupy herself, and glanced as she did so at Mrs. Webster.

"Shall I go?"



Mrs. Webster sighed, fidgeted, and turned away her head. "I suppose you must. But won't you see if some one in the house can come and sit with me? And don't stay too long, will you?"

When Lois returned ready for the walk, the mood had changed. "You needn't ask any one to come," said Mrs. Webster, with unusual cheerfulness; "Doctor Manning thinks I shall get a nap if I am left alone. He is coming in to see me again when you get back."

"What did you do to her?" asked Lois, when they left the house. "I wish I had your faculty for cheering her up and making her see things in the right way. I have lost all my influence. I don't think she cares in the least about me now."

"Oh, you think that because you are tired, and I don't wonder that you are. It is quite time that you were relieved of some of the care, Miss Putnam. I want to talk to you about that, and also about other things, and that is one of the reasons why I asked you to come out. I knew I couldn't see you alone in the house. I want to ask some advice as well as to give some."

Lois felt sudden little thrills of pleasure. It delighted her to know that he sought her counsel, this strong young man who had such clear views



and decided opinions, and upon whom it was so natural for others to lean. Was it possible that she could help him? She looked up at him shyly. He was so tall and broad, and the face, with its wonderful expression of purity and nobility of purpose, was so far above her. He glanced down at her, a friendly light shining in his blue eyes as he noticed the wistful look in hers.

"How pretty she is," he thought; "and how tired she looks. There is more in her face than there used to be; perhaps she has more character than I have given her credit for. She has certainly been having a hard time, poor little girl, and I am sorry for her." And so he looked at her with sympathy and friendliness, and Lois was happy, fancying it to be something else.

"Shall we go out to the Bois?" he asked, "and try to imagine that we are not in this big city with all its turmoil? I believe I shall not be sorry to leave Paris. New York is not far behind it, but at least that is my native place."

"You are not going?" exclaimed Lois, quickly.

"My term is nearly up; in less than a month I shall be free. I hoped it would be extended, but some French fellow with lots of influence has been appointed instead. It is quite natural that he





LOIS WAS HAPPY.







should get it. I have gained a good deal here, but now I must think about going home. I am going to write to my mother to-night. I should like to stay over here and travel a little before settling down to build up a practice, but don't you think it would be losing time? I have got to make a living, you know."

"It is hard to say," said Lois. "I know so little about such things. Do you just go back and take an office and wait for patients to come to you?"

He laughed. "Sometimes it is like that, but I am hoping to get an appointment in one of the big hospitals in New York, and if I do, then I stand a chance of being chosen as assistant to one of the big surgeons afterward, and that helps things along very much. Of course, my experience here will be of immense use to me. I should not get an appointment before next fall, probably, but in the meantime do you think I ought to go home and pick up what I can?"

Lois found it very difficult to give an opinion. She knew very well what she wished he would do. The thought of his leaving her filled her with an almost unbearable despair. She was frightened at the intensity of her feeling, for she was not accustomed to deep emotions.



"But I want to talk to you about your own affairs," continued Arthur, presently. "Freddy will soon be well enough to leave the hospital, and it seems to me a poor plan for him to go back to that *pension*. His mother is too miserable, and as for you, it is quite preposterous that you should have so much care. Why would it not be a good idea for you all to go south, and join the others at Hyères?"

"Mrs. Webster would never consent; she is too devoted to Paris." Lois spoke calmly, but she was disturbed. She longed for her friends, and she was very weary of her close confinement, but she did not wish to leave Paris. Not now, at any rate; perhaps in a month. She dared not ask herself why she thought of the limit of a month.

"I am going to talk to Mrs. Webster when we go back," said Arthur; "I wanted to consult you first; and really I think you would better do that. You can get there very comfortably from here, stopping one night on the way. My mother writes that it is very charming there, and they are all going to stay until May. It gets too hot to be safe for northern people after that. It is now the middle of March, so you would have six weeks. You need it, Miss Putnam, indeed you do, apart from the benefit it would be to Mrs. Webster and Freddy."



Lois smiled, but said nothing. She did not wish to go, but it pleased her that he should be thinking of her welfare. Before the day was over, however, she had suddenly changed her mind, and found that she did wish to go very much indeed; in fact, if a certain decision could be reached, it became the one thing of all others that she most desired, so strangely are human beings constituted, and by such apparently small events is one's happiness affected. It was merely a whim of Mrs. Webster's, but the gratification of it made all the difference in the world to Lois.

Arthur's suggestion that they should leave Paris for Hyères was received by Mrs. Webster with mingled feelings.

"I should like to get away from this atrocious climate," said she, "and Hyères seems to be attractive, but it is too long a journey. Fancy us spending a night on the way, to say nothing of the all-day travelling, with me so weak and wretched, and Freddy just recovering from such an accident. Lois could never manage it all. If she were Hope, it would be different. Hope is so strong and dependable."

Lois's eyes filled with tears.

"Miss Putnam has proved herself an excellent



nurse, Mrs. Webster," said Arthur, quickly. "I have no doubt Miss Conway is a good traveller and courier, but she would certainly have to work hard to be a better friend and nurse than Miss Putnam has been to you."

Lois looked gratefully at her champion. It was delightful to feel that there was some one to stand up for her. She did not mind Mrs. Webster's irritability if it brought forth such words of commendation.

"Of course she is!" said Mrs. Webster, taking the girl's hand with one of her pretty, appealing gestures. "She is a dear child, but I am such a goose, you know. When I am travelling I feel as if I wanted somebody big and strong to look after things, and Hope is quite a giantess. Now if you were going with us, I shouldn't hesitate a minute. Why can't you?"

"Oh, I have my work to look after, and I can't afford to travel so much. I have pretty much decided that, when I leave the hospital in a few weeks, I must go home at once. But you could engage a maid to go with you; there are courier maids, you know."

"I don't want a courier maid. If I had a courier at all, I would rather have a man. I like a man to depend upon. I want you to go."



"It is impossible, Mrs. Webster; I can't afford it."

"But you could if I were to pay for you," said Mrs. Webster, rising in the excitement of the new idea that had come to her, and sitting upright on the sofa. "I have plenty of money now, and I must have you with us. Freddy is ill and I am ill; we both need a doctor. Only last month some New York people passed through Paris with a young doctor in the party; some one was an invalid and they brought him. I thought then how delightful it must be to have a doctor with you always over here, if you were not particularly well. I dislike these foreign doctors, with their broken English, and the English doctors don't understand American nerves. Yes, you must certainly go with us. I will pay your expenses and a salary besides."

Arthur hesitated. "I must think it over, and so must you," said he. "We can't decide at once, for there is a good deal involved. I must think of the future and of my delay in going back to New York. It might mean the loss of an appointment. At any rate, I must consult my mother. I will write to her at once and ask her to telegraph. I must take three days before I decide, Mrs. Webster. Day after tomorrow I will give you a definite answer, if you are willing to wait that long, and if by then you will still



feel like having me go with you. Otherwise I must say no at once."

"Oh, I hate to wait," she said, as she sank back on the sofa; "suspense is so disagreeable. And I simply cannot take no for an answer. You must go with us or I shall not leave Paris."

The days that ensued were more trying than any that had gone before, for Lois herself was so deeply interested in the decision that Arthur might reach that she found it almost impossible to be patient with Mrs. Webster's increased nervousness and ill-humor. But the hours dragged themselves away, and on the third day came Arthur's reply. He would go with them, and would remain with Mrs. Webster until the party returned to the north; he would then go back to New York.

So the matter was settled to the satisfaction of all concerned, and preparations were made for an immediate departure. Arthur found that, owing to affairs at the hospital, it would be desirable for him to leave somewhat sooner than he had at first thought possible, and in a week from the day the plan was arranged they left Paris.

Freddy, with his once round and rosy face grown quite pale and thin from long confinement, was brought to the station directly from the hospital



by Doctor Manning. The boy was radiant at the turn of affairs, for his devotion to Arthur had increased tenfold since his accident. The elder brother now occupied even a higher place in his affections than Reginald, and Freddy's determination to be a doctor was more firmly fixed than ever.

"I'll be your assistant," said he, as they drove from the hospital to the *Gare de Lyon*. "Then I can go with you everywhere. I like hospitals and doctors and nurses. They're awful good to a feller, but you're the best of all. You see, you're the kind of a feller that makes another feller do and think nice things. You don't say anything much, but there's a kind of a look that comes into your face, you know. When you're glad, it makes a feller feel like running and jumping and whistling very loud, and when you're sorry about anything I've said, I feel like my dog Banners at home when he's been scolded or whipped. And the funny part of it is that you don't say anything. It's just your face."

Arthur looked down at the radiant little face beside him and laughed. "Yours makes me feel like jumping and whistling this morning, Freddy; you look so jolly. Are you so glad you are leaving Paris?"



"Mighty glad, as long as you're going too. You see, Paris is only meant for grown-ups; a feller like me can't have any fun here. I guess Hyères is going to be better. There'll be Reggie, and then Hope and Diana are heaps more fun than Lois. Hope's awfully funny, and when she isn't talking with her tongue her face talks. Di is quieter, but she's terribly good-natured. And then there are lots of things a feller can do at Hyères. Is this the station? What a big place! There are mother and Lois and Cecil Beauchamp! Is he going too? Hello, Cecil! What makes you look so glum?"

In the excitement of the arrival and the meeting this question remained unanswered. Doctor Manning attended to the luggage and looked after the comfort of the invalids, and thus Lois and Cecil were left together. They paced up and down the broad platform; Lois's face, into which the color had come back, was dimpling with smiles, and formed a great contrast to that of young Beauchamp, who, as Freddy had observed, looked "glum."

"I believe you are glad to go," said he.

"Of course I am!" exclaimed Lois. "Don't you know that I am going back to my dear home friends? It is next best to going really home."

"You would like to go home, wouldn't you?"



"I shall be glad when the time comes if — if we all go."

"Nothing would make you want to stay over here, would it?"

"Why, no; of course not!"

"But, then, you haven't seen England. Perhaps when you come there you will feel more like staying."

"But why should I? If you were to come to America you would enjoy seeing it, but you wouldn't wish to give up your own country and stay there."

"I might if — if somebody wanted me to stay."

"I think it must be time for us to get into the train," said Lois, turning suddenly.

"But, Miss Putnam, you will let me know as soon as you reach England, won't you?"

"Oh, yes."

"And perhaps I shall still be in Paris when you come back. You won't forget to let me know, will you?"

"No, indeed; you have been so kind, Mr. Beauchamp. It has been very nice to see you here, and I hope we shall meet you again before we go home. Thank you ever so much."

"Don't thank me," said Cecil, miserably. "Do you suppose I want to be thanked? I would rather you said anything else."



And then the good-bys were said, the guards cried "*En voiture!*" the carriage doors were closed, and slowly the long train moved out of the station. In the mind of Lois, Paris and Cecil Beauchamp already belonged to the past.

The young Englishman stepped into a cab, and was driven through the crowded streets to his hotel.

"What a hideously empty place Paris is," he said to himself. "Nobody here I care in the least about. One might as well be in South Africa. I wonder if I could induce my mother to try the Riviera for a bit before going to London. The climate would be much better for her than it is in this beastly place. Heigho! She looked so awfully happy, didn't she?"

This time he was not alluding to his mother.



## CHAPTER FIFTEEN.

**D**IANA STUART was in the "*Jardin d'Acclimatation*" of Hyères. She sat alone in a secluded part of the garden. Beautiful trees cast a shadow over the bench on which she was sitting and upon the grass near; beyond the shade vast beds of flowers lay in the sun, which was growing hotter each day, and the smooth bright surface of a lake shone in the distance. Curious trees and shrubbery could be found in all parts of this garden, and exquisite plants of every description, which were raised there for the purpose of sending them later to adorn the gardens of Paris.

Diana did not look beyond the shade. It was too dazzling out there; too beautiful in its sunshine and its glorious coloring for her weak eyes to endure. She sat with them cast down, her hands folded idly in her lap. She had neither book nor work; her thoughts were her sole companions, and they were sad.



"I doubt if I am ever any better," she was thinking. "How many weeks have gone by and yet there is no improvement? My art, my precious art! I was going to do such wonderful things! It seems so strange that the talent has been given to me only to be taken away. I want so much to make the most of it, and yet now it has been made impossible for me to improve it in the least. I did so want to be able to support myself and help father, and I hate so to be idle. It is misery to me to have nothing to do. And oh, the color! The beautiful color, right out there, but so far beyond me! I can't look at the light. I have got to sit in the shade for the rest of my days, I suppose."

Diana was young, and experience had not yet taught her that we must all sit in the shade for a time, knowing that light and color lie beyond; that they are not meant for our eyes just at present; but we can be glad that they are there and that by and by we shall emerge from the shadow and find the world all the more beautiful because we have known what it is to sit in darkness. She had been very plucky, and no one, not even Hope, who could often see beneath the surface which others could not penetrate, not even Hope suspected half the mental suffering that Diana had experienced.



When she first came to Hyères the novelty of the scenes had amused her, and she had not had time to think, but now her thoughts preyed upon her. Her eyes looked sad and weary, and her face had grown thinner. She sat with her arm upon the back of the bench and her head on her hand, and she was so absorbed in her own suffering that she paid no heed to anything else. She was quite unconscious that a young man walked along the path near who looked at her with interest, and that presently he returned, walking more slowly and watching her closely as he passed. There had been a number of people in the garden since Diana came, and as the path did not lead directly in front of her bench she had paid no attention to them.

Ten minutes later a young girl came over the same path. She was walking briskly, and she held her head high, with the little suggestion of independence that was peculiar to her, while on her face was an expression of fun and laughter which presented a sharp contrast to Diana's sad countenance. It was Hope.

"Well, here you are at last!" said she, blithely, as she seated herself. "I have been looking for you in all the gardens, and finally thought of this. I



never dreamed that you would come prowling off here by yourself, but it was fate, Diana. Fate led you here. If you had been in any other garden I never should have met him!"

"Met who?"

"Whom would be better English, my child! Be very careful on this side of the Atlantic, or they will say we don't know how to speak it. There may be an English man or woman—more likely a woman, for they are more critical of us—lurking behind these bushes, all ready to pounce on you for forgetting that the pronoun 'who' takes—"

"Oh, hush, Hope! Tell me what has happened. You have had an adventure. I can tell from the look of you."

"Which is more than you have had, to judge from the look of you. But it was lucky you came here, and very lucky I thought of coming after you here, and still luckier I met him, or I should never have been able to find you. He told me where you were."

"Who?"

"Ah, this time 'who' is correct. Why, the American, of course. The 'Man on the Bridge.' After all these weeks of absence he has come again, and, as I say, he told me where to find you."



Diana sat up very straight and looked at Hope with horrified and reproachful eyes. "You don't mean to say you have *talked* with him? Hope!"

"Of course I did. Now don't be a goose, Di! Haven't we been waiting for weeks and weeks to thank him for what he did for us at Tarascon? Do you suppose I would let such a chance as this slip by? Not by any means. It was funny. I had just been wondering where he was, and if we should ever see him again, when —"

"Not at all funny," said Diana, interrupting her; "you are thinking of it all the time. Wherever we go you are peering around corners and looking for that man. In every new place that is suggested for us to explore you hope to find him, ready to tie your shoe, or pick up your umbrella, or do some other trifling service, that you would magnify a thousand times, and think you must thank him forever after. I know you!"

"Diana, since we have reached France you have acquired a habit of gross exaggeration. I am surprised at you. And as for my shoe," she leaned over as she spoke and proceeded to tie it, "he would be kept busy if he began on that piece of work, for it is always coming untied. I must take lessons of a man in tying a bow-knot; theirs never



come undone as ours do. They have a different way of making a knot. I wonder if *he* would teach me?"

"Hope!"

Hope looked up, her face rosy from her exertions and her stifled laughter. "Di, you are too delicious! Calm yourself, dear. I will get the safe and guileless Reggie to give me lessons in shoe-tying."

"Well, will you ever tell me what happened? What did you say, and what did he say?"

"Why, do you really want to know?" cried Hope, with exaggerated surprise. "I was under the impression that you interrupted me because you didn't care to hear any more. If you do, I will go on and give you the details. I was walking along when — you are sure you want to hear, Di? Quite sure?"

"Don't be a goose. You know you wouldn't miss telling me for the world."

"How we are misunderstood!" exclaimed Hope, pathetically rolling up her eyes. "I was only thinking of your pleasure. Well, I was walking along wondering if he — I mean, wondering where you were, when I came to a path which crossed mine. I looked down this path, and I could scarcely believe



my eyes, for coming along directly toward me was the very man — I mean, was ” —

“ Was the very man you had been thinking about.”

“ Another interruption ! ” sighed Hope, in a resigned voice. “ Was the very man I had been anxious to thank for getting us, you and me, out of an awful scrape. He looked smiling and pleasant ” —

“ Humph ! ” fairly grunted Diana.

“ Did you speak ? ” asked Hope. “ I didn’t quite catch your remark.”

“ Go on ! I didn’t speak, but I suppose *you* did.”

“ Yes, I did ; and very politely, as I have been brought up to do.”

“ To people you don’t know ? ”

“ To kind people who have proved themselves friends in a strange land ; who have rescued me and my friend from insult and persecution ; who — but I will spare you further details, for you know them already. As I said, he looked smiling and pleasant. He has very good teeth, Di. I am learning to appreciate the beauty of American teeth. And he has very fine eyes. They are such honest eyes.”

“ You are learning to appreciate the beauty of American eyes, too, I suppose.”



"Yes, thoroughly. And his nose —"

"Let us drop his nose and go on."

"Drop his nose! Why, my dear, it would break, and it is such a beautiful nose now! Fancy it with an ugly broken bump, perhaps right on the bridge — not the bridge of Avignon, Di, but the bridge of an American nose!"

In spite of herself Diana laughed. "You are too absurd! Will you get beyond his personal appearance and tell me what he said? I know what he looks like."

"But you have seldom heard him speak. That is just the way I felt about it, and yet you blame me for stopping to talk to him. People are so inconsistent! Well, to make a long story short, I held out my hand very cordially when I saw him, and I said, 'Oh, here you are again! We have all wanted to see you to thank you for your great kindness at Tarascon. We tried to that day at La Plage, but you disappeared so quickly, and we haven't been able to find you since, though we have looked for you.'"

"Hope! As if we had *all* spent our time hunting for him!"

"Would you rather I had said '*I* have been looking for you'? I didn't think that would be at all proper. He seemed pleased, but of course he made



light of what he did and said it was nothing, and he was very glad to restore us to our family, and then he informed me that he had just seen my sister. 'My sister!' I exclaimed, feeling quite rattled, and wondering if George Howard had actually brought the family. 'Do you mean Alice or Marjorie?'

"Hope," said Diana, "I really and truly think that your head is turned by that man and you are losing every vestige of what little common sense you ever had. Alice or Marjorie!"

"It was rather idiotic, I confess, but you see I was so taken by surprise at meeting him that I felt that anything was possible."

"And what answer did he make to that?"

"He said he didn't know what her name was, but it was the sister who was with me at Avignon, at Tarascon, and at La Plage. I laughed and explained that my two sisters were at home, but that you were my dearest friend, and that it was not our mother and brother who were on the train, but friends we were travelling with."

"You told him all this? Why, Hope, you must have talked with him for hours."

"Not at all. The time went all too quickly," replied Hope, who was enjoying Diana's disapproval almost as much as she had enjoyed her conversation



with the unknown. "And then I asked him where you were, and thanked him again and bowed *very* pleasantly, and then I walked one way and he the other. This makes the third time he has helped me; I told you there would be a third time. It would have been so hard to find you if he hadn't pointed out the path. I might have been wandering even now looking for you."

"Is he going to stay here long?"

"In the garden? Are you anxious to see him, Di? If I had known that, I would have brought him with me."

"No, I am not. Is he going to stay at Hyères? You know very well what I mean."

"Do you suppose I asked him? Do you suppose he told me? Di, you must think we talked a very long time."

"I do; and I have no doubt that you know all his plans. What is his name?"

"He is still the Great Unknown; still the hero of the *Pont d'Avignon*. I don't know his name. I have no doubt it is John Smith or Thomas Jones, or some other equally uninteresting title. I do love a nice, romantic, high-sounding name, such as Adrian, or Victor, or Sidney, the kind the hero has in an English novel, but it would be just my luck to



find that this is Thomas S. Jones, and that 'S' stands for Smith."

"It can't make the slightest difference to us what his name is," said Diana, severely. "Were there any letters?"

"Oh, didn't I tell you? Mr. Thomas S. Jones put it all out of my head. They are coming to-night, Mrs. Webster, Freddy, and Doctor Manning. Isn't it exciting? Lois wrote Mrs. Manning and there was a note in it for us. Here it is, and I think she is quite wild to get to us:—

"Girls, dearest girls! We are coming! coming! coming! We hope to be with you Tuesday evening. Doctor Manning thinks Freddy is quite equal to it, and Mrs. Webster has revived wonderfully. It means so much to have Doctor Manning come with us. He has been so kind and takes everything off my shoulders. Oh, girls, am I to see you soon? It is too glorious to believe.

"Always yours,

"LOIS.

"P. S. I shall never leave you again. I am sure you will enjoy having Doctor Manning. It will make up for Freddy, but he is ever so much nicer than he used to be. Doctor Manning has such a



wonderful influence over him. *Au revoir* until Tuesday night. Doctor Manning says we shall get there about eight o'clock."

"Isn't she delighted?" said Diana; "and isn't it nice to have her feel so?"

"Indeed it is; and she seems to feel equally delighted with Doctor Manning. A note of barely a page, and she mentions his name one — two — three — four — five times!"

"I don't wonder she does. He has been so devoted to them."

"It is so unlike Lois to say so much. I believe her experiences in Paris have quite waked her up, and I am curious to see her. Dear old, placid, matter-of-fact, beautiful Lois! It will be nice to have her with us again."

The travellers arrived that evening, weary from their long journey, but so glad to get there that they did not mind the fatigue as much as might have been expected of the two invalids. The doctor ordered them at once to bed and advised Mrs. Webster not to get up until late the following day. Freddy, he knew, would be quite rested after a night's sleep, and equal to the fun of exploring a new place.



The Mannings went off to their rooms for a family talk and the three friends to theirs. Lois had one next to that of Diana and Hope, and it was late before they settled down for the night. There was so much to tell, so many confidences to be given and received.

"I feel as if I ought to confess something," said Lois, when she had recounted her experiences in Paris. "I didn't do the right thing in leaving you. I ought to have insisted upon staying with you, and then Mrs. Webster would have yielded. I had no right to break up our party. I was well punished by the hard time I have had with Mrs. Webster. I am very fond of her, girls," she added loyally, "but when she isn't feeling well she is apt to be a little exacting, you know."

"To put it mildly," said Hope. "You know very well, Lois, that she is an awfully selfish woman, about the least desirable person for a travelling-companion that we could have found in 'the States,' as our English friends would say. I think you got out of it just in time; you would have been worn to a shadow if it had gone on any longer. But you look pretty well; it seems to me you are really looking better than when you left us."

"Oh, I am very well now," replied Lois, quickly;



"I was tired at one time, but I have been really better since Freddy's accident — at least since after the first few days, for I haven't had so much on my mind. Doctor Manning has helped me so much. For some reasons I don't regret going to Paris, and I have had some good times there, and — and — I think it was all for the best."

Hope looked at her narrowly. What did Lois mean? There seemed to be an undercurrent of happiness about her that Hope had noticed at once — she had a habit of studying her friends and their moods. It was owing to her intense love for most of her fellow-beings and her equally intense dislike for those whom she did not love. Hope could seldom be indifferent in those days; later in life she discovered what human nature is, and that we must learn to make allowances. She ceased to judge harshly, and she found as she grew older that there is at least a grain of good to be found in even the most hardened man or woman, if one only looks for it in the right way; but in those days of her youth and ignorance she was a severe critic.

The day after Lois arrived at Hyères was that on which the band played in one of the gardens for two hours in the afternoon, and the girls decided to go.

"It only plays twice a week," explained Diana,



"so we must make the most of it. It is fun to watch the people."

"They are almost all French people," said Hope. "The English are at the big hotels, and I suppose they have amusements of their own and don't condescend to the gardens, for we hardly ever see them there. That is one reason why I am glad we are at Hyères instead of at Cannes, or Nice, or Mentone, or any of the other places on the Riviéra. They must be entirely given up to titled English and rich Americans, and you don't get the real native life in the same way."

"Sour grapes, I am afraid, Hope," said Reginald, laughing.

The three girls, with Arthur and Reginald Manning and Freddy Webster, were just leaving their hotel, and they stood for a few minutes looking at the square.

"It is quiet enough there now, but I just wish you could see it on Sunday, Arthur," continued his brother. "You just wait."

"I can imagine it; I have spent a good many Sundays in Paris. I have always wanted to see Provence; the natives are a race of themselves, and are quite distinct and different from other French people."



"Very different," said Hope; "they are a delightful people; so kind-hearted and cheerful, and the family life is so sweet. The English clergyman who came to see us the other day has lived here for many years, and he told us all about them. It is great fun to shop here. If you once cross the threshold you simply must buy something, if it is only a pin; and the father, and mother, and all the children to the youngest baby come forward to assist at the sale."

"In all of France it is very much the same way," said Arthur. "Madame is the business manager of the family, and Monsieur doesn't dare conduct the smallest *affaire du finance* without her advice and approval. Isn't this an interesting street?"

They were walking along the principal street, lined with its small shops. Many of the wares were displayed on the sidewalk, protected from the sun by long, loose, canvas curtains that flapped in the wind, but not shielded from the dust which blew in clouds over the laces, gloves, silks, and other finery that were exposed to view.

"It is the windiest place I ever was in," said Hope; "when we first came the mistral was terrible. The doors and windows rattled all night, and we could scarcely keep warm. The dust blew as high



as the third-story windows, and when we walked in it, it seemed to cut our faces."

"That couldn't have improved your eyes, Miss Stuart," said Doctor Manning.

"No, I suppose not," replied Diana, turning toward him for an instant the beautiful eyes that held so much expression in their brown depths, which even the ugly spectacles could not hide. His own looked at her with sympathy, for his professional instinct told him how much she had suffered.

They had reached the garden by this time, and hired chairs of the woman in charge. These they carried to a shady spot, where they sat while the band played in the *Kiosque de Musique*, the tall palms waved their graceful tops against the blue sky, and the natives and visitors walked about the garden talking, laughing, and gesticulating. The whole scene was unmistakably French. There were groups of peasant children on the free benches, the eldest perhaps a girl of ten, who sat knitting, with long wires for needles which flew with startling rapidity. The stocking grew visibly while the little "knitter in the sun" never glanced at her work, but bestowed her attention on the young family of whom she was in charge, or more often on the passers-by.

An old man came along selling newspapers, doing



a thriving business, while he called out in a high, rasping voice, "*Le Petit Bleu ! Le Petit Journal !*" Then came a vender of opera glasses, then a crippled beggar, showing some hideous deformity in the hope of appealing to the pity of his more fortunate fellow-beings. He was very cheerful, however, and if the alms bestowed was not to his liking, he expostulated with the person who had given it, assuring him with a laugh and a joke that it was not enough, to which the giver returned an equally humorous reply.

"Surely they are the most cheerful people in the world," said Hope, when they had listened to a conversation of this kind. "They always have something jolly to say and something to laugh about. Even the beggars have their jokes. We had such a funny time with a milliner the other day, buying a hat for Diana."

"I thought Di had a new hat," said Lois, looking at it critically.

"Oh, yes. We had been gazing at it for weeks in the window before we bought it. I was pretty sure Di would get it eventually, but we didn't dare to go in, for we knew our fate would be sealed if we did, so we hung over the window every time we passed by. At last Madame the milliner couldn't stand it any longer. She came out and invited us



in, assuring us that it was '*entrée libre.*' *Libre!* It was anything else. She placed the untrimmed hat on Diana's head, and said she had never seen anything so beautiful; Mademoiselle was lovely before, but now she was angelic. We asked the price, and she said eight francs. Fancy it for an untrimmed simple straw! We said it was too much, and we finally succeeded in beating her down to five francs, and we said we would take it if she would stretch it a little. She was radiant, and then we found that we didn't have that much money with us. I wish you could have seen Madame's face fall! Then we told her we would come back in the afternoon and bring the money with us, and take the hat.

" '*Bien!*' she cried; '*les Anglaises* can always be trusted.'

" 'But we are not *Anglaises*, we are Americans,' we said.

" '*Les Américaines! Tant mieux! Tant mieux!* Americans are always rich.'

"I was dreadfully afraid she would tack on the three francs again that we had had such a hard time getting her to take off, so I assured her in my most emphatic French that we were not rich; on the contrary, we were very poor.



“ ‘Impossible!’ she cried. ‘Your country is far away, you travel, you come here and stay at these hotels, where you are obliged to pay vast sums. It takes *beaucoup, beaucoup d’argent* to come. You come; therefore you have the money. You are rich.’

“That did sound rather unanswerable, so I said that sometimes people had to spend money for health; that my friend had come for that. She turned to Diana. ‘*Mademoiselle est malade?* Impossible! She has not the air of being ill.’ Diana explained that it was her eyes and her nerves, so she didn’t look ill.

“ ‘Nerves!’ cried Madame, throwing up her hands, ‘I too have nerves. Is Mademoiselle afflicted as I am? When one tells me she has a headache, I too have a headache. When one mentions a pain in the shoulder, I too have a pain in the shoulder. Is it so with Mademoiselle?’ ”

“ ‘Pretty good,’ said Doctor Manning, laughing, as they all did, at Hope’s history. “What did you tell her, Miss Stuart?’ ”

“ ‘I said that my own aches and pains were enough without those of my friends,’ replied Diana, with her slow, sweet smile. Arthur thought he had never seen a more charming face than hers.



“And she let us have the hat,” added Hope; “we went back with the money, but I don’t think she had stretched it at all.”

“It is a very pretty hat,” said Arthur. He glanced again at the hat and its wearer. Then he caught sight of Hope’s face, across which was flitting a new expression. Evidently she had seen something or some person in the crowd who interested her extremely. His eyes followed hers, and then he uttered an exclamation of surprise and pleasure.

“Of all the lucky things that ever happened!” he said, as he jumped to his feet. “Excuse me a moment.” He almost ran across the garden, and seized the hand of a man who had just come in the gate, slapping him vigorously on the shoulder. The salutation was returned in the same manner and spirit.

Hope looked at Diana and Diana looked at Hope, while Reginald began to hum:—

“‘*Sur le pont, sur le pont, sur le pont d’Avignon.*’

Hope, cheer up, my child. All things come to her who waits, even mysterious will-o’-the-wisps. Apparently he is a long-lost cousin.”



And then across the garden came Arthur and Hope's nameless hero.

"Here is an old college friend whom I haven't seen for years!" exclaimed Arthur, joyfully. And he introduced to them Mr. Philip Sargent.

"And his name isn't Thomas S. Jones," whispered Hope to Diana.



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN.

**I**T was some weeks later. The sun had grown hotter, the mistral had ceased to blow, the mimosa trees were blossoming in yellow glory, the air was filled with the singing of birds. Springtime had come once more to this southern land, and all nature was doing homage to her.

It was uncomfortably warm now in the middle of the day, and even the men among the foreign visitors carried umbrellas. The proprietors of the cafés had placed little tables upon the sidewalks, where their patrons could sit in comfort and discuss the affairs of the nation, and all of Hyères had turned out-of-doors to revel in the balmy weather.

These weeks had seen progress in other affairs as well. Mrs. Webster had regained her strength to a wonderful degree, and appeared to be as well as any one; Freddy was also perfectly well again, and ready to make up for time lost in being an invalid; and Philip Sargent had become so completely one of the party that it was difficult to realize that they



had known his name so short a time. Already a number of excursions had been taken, and more were planned. They had been to Toulon for the day and had explored the city, they had seen the French fleet arrived for the manœuvres, and had even been on board of a man-of-war in the harbor. They had walked several times to Costebelle, not far from Hyères, to see the magnificent view. They had also visited Carqueiranne, and they went to see the salt marshes, a thousand acres in extent, which produce many thousand of tons of salt in a year.

The addition of two young men to the party made their daily life quite different from what it had been when Hope and Diana were alone with the Mannings, and the days on which they stayed quietly at Hyères were passed in planning some new excursion. The latest suggestion was for a picnic, and it emanated from the fertile brain of Hope.

“A regular old-fashioned American picnic,” said she, “with baskets of sandwiches and hard-boiled eggs and bottles of olives and cold coffee. Alas, that I can’t say *iced* coffee!”

They were at La Plage when she thought of this festivity, sitting on the sand by the little waves of



the blue and tideless Mediterranean. They had all driven over in the omnibus to spend the afternoon on the beach.

"That sounds good," said Philip Sargent, "and I dare say the *menu* can be carried out if you are willing to boil the eggs yourself and will be content with cooked olives."

"Those brown, bitter, shrivelled things are not what I call olives," said Hope, "and the suspense involved in eating them wears upon my temper. You pick out a fine, large, plump, brown olive; you convey it to your mouth. Is it going to be the most delicious morsel you ever tasted, or is it going to be so bitter and horrible that the memory of it will dwell with you forever? Time alone will prove. I don't like olives in their own country nearly as well as the salty-soury-greenery-yallery ones we have at home."

"There are so many surprises when you come to the native land of things and people," said Sargent.

"Sardines, for instance," suggested Reginald. "Who could imagine a sardine anything but a little shiny, slimy, slippery fishlet packed tight in a tin box and swimming in oil? Did it ever occur to you that a sardine actually grew and lived in the sea, just like whales or cod or mackerel or any other



everyday old fish? When they came on the table here, long and brown and fried and hot, I had to be introduced to them all over again. It was very boring, as Cecil Beauchamp would say. By the way, I had a letter from Cecil this morning. He's begun to write to me; I wonder what for. I've had three letters from him since you came."

Reginald gazed meditatively at Lois.

"We saw a good deal of him in Paris," said she, calmly.

"So I imagined. He said he tried to get his mother to come to Hyères, but she wouldn't. He sent a whole string of messages to you, Lois."

"Then why haven't you delivered them?"

"Forgot them till this minute, and now I can't remember them."

"That's an Irish speech," laughed Hope; "but about the picnic?"

"We will have it, Miss Conway," said Sargent. "Shall it be to-morrow?"

"Why not the day after?" said Diana. "That is Hope's birthday."

"Good! The very way to celebrate it! Splendid!" they all exclaimed.

"Di, what did you tell for?" cried Hope. "I meant to have told you not to give it away. I am



getting so awfully old I am quite sensitive. Eighteen years old! And Di and Lois won't either of them be that for months. There is one time of the year when we are all the same age at once, and then I go shooting ahead."

"How do you make that out?" asked Arthur.

Diana explained that the birthdays of herself and Lois were in December, while the others discussed the picnic in all its bearings. After a while they had tea or chocolate at the little restaurant, and then they walked through the garden to the place where they had seen the caterpillars, in the hope of showing them to Freddy.

"What did you think of us, Mr. Sargent, that day you found us all so absorbed in them?" asked Hope. "We must have looked perfectly absurd."

"I thought, 'Here are those nice-looking Americans. I wish I knew them.'"

"Very flattering! And it is quite natural now that you should wish to make us think that you really thought so then, but at the time you burst into uproarious mirth and scampered away from us as fast as you could go. Why didn't you stay and give us a chance to speak to you?"

"Because I knew Miss Stuart wouldn't approve," he replied, glancing at Diana. "She doesn't alto-



gether smile upon strange adventurers who are found straying on old broken-down bridges, and haunting railway stations and gardens and other queer places." He laughed as he spoke, and so did Diana.

"You mustn't harbor that up against me," said she. "I am obliged to be very stiff and dignified as an offset to Hope."

"You were glad enough to lay aside your stiffness and dignity when Mr. Sargent helped us about taking the train at Tarascon," retorted Hope; "and I defy any one to be dignified when their hat blows off in the mistral."

The younger members of the party walked back from La Plage to Hyères, Mrs. Manning and Mrs. Webster returning by train. They started in an irregular group, but very soon they had divided up in the usual way; Hope and Philip Sargent walked in front, swinging along at a rapid gait and talking as briskly as they walked; then came Lois and Reginald; and at some distance behind were Diana and Arthur Manning. Freddy distributed his attentions among them impartially. His devotion to his doctor was unabated, but he found Reginald as good fun as ever. Hope was always entertaining, but he could not quite understand her conversations with Mr. Sargent when the two were walking alone.



"Hope's as funny as 'Through the Looking Glass' when she's with a lot of other people," said he, "but when she's talking to Mr. Sargent she's as solemn as an owl half the time. They talk about books and things; books a fellow never heard of and don't want to hear of, and what they can find so interesting in them I can't see." He was skipping along beside Lois and Reginald when he said this.

"Very true," said Reginald; "Hope only needed to find out that Sargent was an author to think him just too lovely. She knows all his books by heart, and can quote yards of them to him, and he seems to like it. For my part, if I were a writer I would rather have something new fired at me; not old stuff that I had written myself, wouldn't you, Lois."

"Yes, by all means; I mean, no. Really, I beg your pardon, Reggie, but what did you say? I was thinking of something else."

Reginald laughed in his usual hilarious fashion.

"A penny for your thoughts, Lois! Were they in Paris?"

"Paris!" repeated Lois, scornfully.

Reginald persisted in thinking that Cecil Beauchamp had been especially attentive to her, and he teased her unmercifully. The girl's face and spirits had certainly changed perceptibly during these two



weeks, although only Hope and Reginald had remarked upon it.

In the meantime Diana and Arthur were walking more slowly behind the others. Tall as Diana was he was still taller, and with his great breadth of shoulder and his thick fair hair and blue eyes he looked like a young Norseman. He was talking about matters of small importance, but his voice was so gay and his laugh so ready that Diana, whose depression of spirits had deepened during the last few days, felt cheered in spite of herself.

"I wish I could look on the world as you do," said she, suddenly; "are you never low-spirited?"

"Sometimes, but not often. I am so very well you know, and merely being alive is such a pleasure."

"Yes, you are very well and strong. That is the secret of it, isn't it? People who are gay and cheerful when they are ill are heroes, aren't they? I wonder how you would be if you were not well and were suddenly obliged to give up your chosen profession?"

"I don't know," said he, growing grave at once, and speaking with a note of tender sympathy in his voice that went straight to Diana's heart; "I don't know. It would be awfully hard lines. One loves one's work so tremendously. I am so sorry for you,



Miss Stuart; so awfully sorry. With your work, especially, it must be so hard to give up."

"It is terrible," said she, turning toward him a face which had grown white with intense feeling, while her eyes were larger and darker even than usual. "Sometimes I feel as if I couldn't bear it. Why are things made so hard for people? If God is good and kind, why does He send such trials? Why is there so much suffering in the world? I cannot understand it."

"It is hard to understand," said Arthur, slowly. "No one realizes the suffering more than a physician, and so often we are powerless to help it. But, you know, suffering brings out qualities of character that nothing else would affect. The man or woman who has suffered and has taken it in the right way is sure to come out a better, stronger man or woman for the suffering, and more able to help others. You know there are two ways of taking it; either we get narrow and bitter, or broad and noble. It lies within ourselves."

"How do you know all this?" asked the girl. "You are young and you cannot have suffered very much. You say yourself that you have always been very well."

"There are other sorrows and trials than ill



health," he replied quietly. "I am twenty-six, so I have had time to have troubles. My father's death was a great grief to me; I was seventeen then. We were the best of chums, and I missed him awfully. He had a long and painful illness, and watching his pain made me determine to be a doctor. I realized then how much pain there must be in the world, and I wanted to do what I could to help."

"Why is it so? Why do we come into the world — so many of us — only for pain and trouble?"

"Please don't talk that way, Miss Stuart," said he, gently. "Your life hasn't all been pain and trouble, I am sure, and it will not be so in the future. There are so many things that we can't understand now and that we must accept. Some day I think we shall know why. One thing we are really sure of now is that this wonderful life was given to us for some good purpose, and we are given the chance to make the best and the most of it. It is a great privilege."

They walked on in silence for some minutes. The road was now a narrow lane, leading between walls of masonry twelve feet high, built to protect the plants in the fields beyond from the force of the mistral. A little brook flowed at the foot of the wall, and wild flowers grew on the banks, shining



yellow-bright among the green. Farther on a dozen or so of women washed their clothes in the water as it rushed rapidly over the stones, and in the fields which they had already passed were rows and rows of women and girls who stooped over the plants, their heads tied up in gay-colored cloths to shield them from the hot sun.

"Do you know," said Diana, "I could almost envy these peasant women; they have their work to do and they can do it."

"And so have you."

"Doctor Manning! What do you mean? I have to give it up. The talent has been given to me only to be taken away again. What else can I do? I have no other talent than painting."

"I don't know, but I am positive that there is some other purpose for your life than painting. Apparently you are not to be allowed to do that. Well, then, turn your attention to something else that doesn't require good strong eyes."

"I haven't any other talent," repeated Diana; "I am like the man in the Bible who only had one, and though I don't want to hide it in a napkin, I am obliged to."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the young man. "For all you know you may be the one who had five or



even ten talents, and if you go on in this way you will be hiding them all in a napkin and so be worse than the original owner of only one. I firmly believe that this trial has come to you for the sole purpose of making you find out what stuff you are made of and what else you can do. There are hundreds of others things to be done in the world besides painting pictures. You don't mind my preaching at you this way, do you, Miss Stuart?"

"Oh, no, indeed! I like it, and I thank you for it. It has been such a relief to talk to you. I feel as if I had always known you and could talk to you as freely as I would to Hope, and yet that it will not worry you as I am afraid it does her. That is the reason I have tried to keep it in, and have been so anxious and distressed and — oh, you know, it has been a fearful disappointment, this trip! And though I have really tried very hard to be cheerful, it has seemed sometimes as if I couldn't bear it in silence any longer."

"It must have been awfully hard," said he, warmly; "I wish you would talk to me whenever you feel like it. Make me your safety-valve."

"You have done me ever so much good now," said Diana, gratefully; "I feel cheerfuller already, as Hope would say. I must think up my other four —



or is it nine? — talents that you say I have, lying hidden away. They lie pretty deep, I'm afraid. Perhaps — what do you think? Do you suppose I could study nursing?"

"Of course you could. How I wish you would!"

The day of the picnic, Hope's birthday, dawned clear and warm, and at ten o'clock the younger members of the party set forth; Mrs. Manning and Mrs. Webster, with the luncheon, were to be driven later in the morning to the appointed spot. They left the chief street of the town with its narrow sidewalks basking in the sun, and, turning abruptly, they took a road which wound up and along the hillside. The hill was a mass of green foliage, of red roses, and of white and yellows flowers, and in the woods the birds were filling the April air with their joyous songs. Up and up they climbed, pausing now and again to look at the view. Yellow dandelions and scarlet poppies dotted the grass close at hand, on the terraced hillside olive trees were darkly green, away at the foot of the hill was the broad white highway which leads to Toulon, over which an occasional vehicle passed, a mere speck in the distance. Farms and villas dotted the valley, and away off beyond were the mountains, looming through the hazy morning light. Beautiful Provence was smiling



that day, and it was with the sweetest of smiles — that of one who knows, too, what it is to weep.

They walked until they reached the site of the ancient castle, and, having explored the ruins, for the tower and some of the ramparts still remain, they established themselves near the summit of the hill. The view was magnificent, for the town of Hyères lay spread out before them; the great hotels, the villas, the avenues of palms, the white roads, and away beyond the Mediterranean.

“It is all so beautiful,” said Hope in a low voice to Sargent, “so beautiful that it saddens me. I feel that I can’t grasp it. There is so much beauty that my little weak, human intelligence can’t take it in. Do you ever feel so?”

“I do, indeed,” said he. They were standing a little apart from the others. “It is the feeling that I often have when I am writing and I am trying to express in words some deep emotion of the heart. There are some thoughts, some ideas, that flit through the dim recesses of the mind so vaguely that we can’t grasp them, and yet we are conscious that they are there, and we know that they are beautiful.”

“Yes!” said Hope, turning toward him. Her face, always vividly expressing every passing mood, was aglow with color, her eyes had grown large and



bright, and she looked at him with an eager interest that made her very charming. "Yes, I know what that is; but I didn't suppose that you who have written so much, and seem to find words to express so beautifully and so forcibly all that you want to say, I didn't dream that you ever have that difficulty. I thought it was only ignorant I. There are times when I positively ache with thoughts and ideas that I can't say. I try to grasp them and put them into words, and they vanish while I try. The very trying makes them go. I feel then as I did once when I was in the White Mountains at home. We went up Mount Washington in a dense fog. The clouds had settled thick all about, and it was impossible to realize that we were on a mountain, or that there was anything anywhere that could ever be seen. And then, suddenly, when we were least expecting it, the clouds parted. There was a rift! The most exquisite of views lay before us. And then, before we had time to speak of it, it was gone. The clouds had shut down again. They had parted only long enough to let us know that something was there. Something better and more beautiful than what we had with us, but we couldn't grasp it."

"But you knew it was there, and you will always know it," said Sargent; "and Miss Conway, believe



me, it is the most precious possession a man or woman can have! To my mind, it is better than wealth, or ordinary pleasures, or any of the things that people hold to be so valuable—that power to *feel beyond*, even though we can't always see. Not every one has the power, and to those of us who have it, it doesn't reveal itself very often; but once in a while we *know* that truth and beauty are there. It is the divine spark."

"And I like to think," said Hope, in so low a voice that the words were almost whispered, "that in heaven we shall be able to grasp the whole."

They were silent after this. They had already reached the degree of friendship where spoken words are not necessary when the quiet mood comes.

Presently a shrill voice rang out, very clear and peremptory. "Hope! Hope! Come here quick! It's your birthday, and there are presents, and I'm so hungry I can't wait another minute."

Of course it was Freddy who thus summoned them to the feast. Mrs. Manning, with Lois and Reginald, had arranged it, while Mrs. Webster, in her character of semi-invalid, had placed herself comfortably on cushions, near enough to give suggestions and directions, but at a sufficient distance to require some waiting upon when the repast began.



"How exciting!" cried Hope, as she hurried forward. "Presents up here on top of a hill? However did you bring them?"

"They came in that basket," replied Freddy, "and Mr. Sargent carried it all the way."

"And you made me think it was a basket of eggs!" said Hope.

"I told you you might guess," said Sargent, "and you immediately declared that it was eggs, and you know I never contradict you."

"Don't you? I am not so sure of that. There are certainly lots of times when you don't agree with me. But where are the others? Di and Doctor Manning are not here."

"They're off spooning, I guess," said Freddy, hopping on one foot around the impromptu table as he spoke.

"Freddy!" exclaimed Mrs. Manning.

"Well, I don't mean real spoons," returned the incorrigible *enfant terrible*, "but sort of imitation. I heard 'em the other day. Di gets dumpy and looks as if she'd like to cry, only she doesn't, and then Doctor Manning shines his eyes at her and says something that makes her laugh, and she clears right up. Doctor Manning makes everybody clear up. There was Lois one day —"



"Freddy," interrupted Hope, "it is quite time we began to eat. Just call Di as loud as you called me, and tell her to come right away. I must see my presents at once." As she spoke she stepped in front of Lois, who was thus completely hidden from the others. "Lois, you haven't put out my own precious silver cup! Just look in the basket, won't you? I can't possibly drink out of anything but my own baby cup on my birthday. I have carried it all over Europe."

Lois turned to search for the cup, which Hope knew perfectly well was locked in her trunk at the hotel, but she had saved the situation for Lois. And then, in a moment, the missing members of the party came strolling along a woody path, and the feast began. Every one else was so gay that no one noticed that Lois was quiet; no one but Hope, the heroine of the occasion.

The presents were bestowed: all sorts of amusing trifles, which represented past jokes or gave point to Hope's various characteristics. Speeches were made, and the fun ran high, and then after a while came the time to go down from the hill. The baskets were sent back by a man who came for them, and the party set forth for the hotel by a different route from that by which they had come.



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN.

THEIR way lay through the old town, as it is called; the picturesque, ill-smelling streets, which are so narrow that as they walked in the middle of them they could have almost touched the walls with their outstretched arms on either side, and so dirty that it required some determination to pick their way over the uneven stones which formed the pavement, and which were laid there centuries ago.

They found here none of the light and brightness of Hyères, for the old houses, built of rough masonry, rose high enough to shut out much of the daylight. Some peasant girls looked down from their narrow windows upon the group of foreigners who, laughing and talking gayly, passed beneath. "*Les Anglaises!*" said the girls, and stretched out their heads to watch them. Ancient women and small children sat in some of the doorways, knitting and gossiping. The women of Provence begin early to knit and gossip, and a girl of eight is almost as far advanced



in these two pursuits as is her grandmother. Where the interior of one of these old houses could be seen, it looked black and gloomy and inexpressibly dirty.

The Americans were all together. Mr. Sargent walked in front, leading the way, for he had explored the old town so thoroughly that he was familiar with all its ramifications and the sudden twists and turns of the streets. After a time Lois rather lagged behind. She felt very tired, and it was impossible for her to keep up with the brisk pace set by the others. Neither did she have energy enough to join in the gay conversation. The day had seemed long to her, and she had been glad when the time had come to start for the hotel. She walked more and more slowly, but no one noticed that she was falling behind. They were all pointing out and looking at the quaint, foreign scenes.

"I will let them go on without me," said Lois to herself. "No one will care if I am not with them. I can follow on behind alone."

So she walked very slowly; and, with her eyes on the ground and her mind absorbed in her own thoughts, she paid no further heed to the course pursued by her friends. Somewhat later she



awakened to the fact that the street had grown strangely quiet. The laughing voices which unconsciously she had followed could no longer be heard. She looked in front of her, down the long narrow street; not a creature could be seen. Her friends had disappeared.

As she had wished to leave them, this discovery did not disturb Lois in the least. She was quite sure that she could find her way alone, and she was rather glad than otherwise that she had lost sight of them.

"I suppose they took a turn somewhere along here," she said to herself, "and I will do the same thing."

But when she came to an intersecting street she found that it led back up the hill again. She turned and looked about her; she walked up a little distance and then took another turn. These streets all looked alike; long and dark and so very narrow that one could see nothing in the distance. In a very short time Lois had completely lost her way. None of the natives were to be seen in the street through which she was now passing, but as she glanced in at the dark doorways it seemed as if sinister faces were dimly visible through the darkness. Although she knew that the Provence people were



a kindly race, she was frightened. It was all so strange, so very foreign.

Presently she turned another corner and saw a group of women and children. She stopped before them and asked her way. They pointed, gesticulated, and poured forth a torrent of words, of which she could not understand one. The Provençal tongue resembles Italian more than it does Parisian French. They seemed to point, however, to the left, so Lois turned and went back. The children followed her, clamoring for sous, and she gave them some money that she might be rid of them. As she put her purse back into her pocket a man stepped out of one of the dark doorways.

He was an unpleasant-looking object whom she had seen begging in the gardens. He had a wooden leg, and he had lost one of his hands, and he was in the habit of thrusting forward what was left of this arm to excite the pity of the people, while with his remaining hand he held his hat for alms.

Lois hurried on, but the wooden leg stumped as quickly over the cobble-stones. This dreadful beggar was following her, she very well knew, and she began to run, tired though she was, and in imminent danger of tripping over the rough stones. She came to another street and, as is the custom in



Hyères, both old and new, its name was placed conspicuously upon the wall of one of the houses. It was the *Rue Paradis*.

The name seemed to give Lois courage for a desperate alternative. If she followed this long *Rue Paradis* which seemed to have no end, she would soon be overtaken by her pursuer, but if she could escape from him for a few minutes by taking refuge in one of the houses around the corner until he had passed on, she might then retrace her steps. Afterward she would try to find her way to the summit of the hill, and then return to the new town by the way by which they had gone to the picnic that morning. She scarcely dared venture into one of these houses, but could anything be worse than this dreadful beggar? She glanced back over her shoulder; he was running with a briskness incredible in a wooden leg. There was no time to be lost, and in a moment Lois had turned the corner of the *Rue Paradis* and had disappeared.

In the meantime her friends had walked on until they reached the market-place. Here fruit and vegetables were displayed, and the clamoring natives bought and sold in the crowded street and open square. This part of the old town was separated



from the new town by the solid walls of houses, and the only communication was by means of dark, tunnel-like streets built beneath them. The two quarters were as distinct from each other in all their characteristics as though they had been many miles apart.

The Americans stopped to buy some oranges, and it was then that Lois was first missed.

"I don't see Miss Putnam," said Arthur Manning. He looked back and up the street by which they had just come. "Has any one seen her lately?"

When they thought about it they remembered that not one of them had spoken with Lois within the last ten minutes.

"But she has been with us, I am sure," said Hope; "she was walking behind us all."

"Oh, of course, she was with us," said Diana, "or I should have missed her before."

"She has probably stopped to look at something," suggested Mrs. Manning. "Arthur, you would better go back and meet her. It is not a nice place for her to be in alone."

"Yes, I will," said he. "You needn't wait. I will bring her to the hotel. I remember now that she looked tired, and we ought not to have hurried on as we did."



So the others finished their purchases and walked down under the arch and out to their hotel, while Arthur retraced his steps. He found no sign of Lois, however, and presently he began to feel vaguely alarmed. What could have become of the girl, and how long had she been missing? He was annoyed that they had all been so careless. He should have watched her when he saw how tired she looked. Poor little girl, she had not looked well since they came. All that she went through in Paris with Mrs. Webster had been too much for her, and the southern climate was perhaps too enervating.

It suddenly occurred to Arthur as he tramped up the stony lane that he had really seen very little of Lois since they had arrived at Hyères, although in Paris they had been such good friends. He liked her immensely, he said to himself, and she was as pretty as a picture, although he himself preferred dark hair and eyes; Diana's, for instance. And there was much in Diana's face that was lacking in that of Lois; so much more character, so much unselfishness and sweetness. And her self-control was wonderful, for the poor girl had undoubtedly suffered great physical as well as mental pain. And so, while looking for Lois, he thought of Diana, and presently he turned into the *Rue Paradis*.



"Where can she be?" he said to himself, at last thoroughly alive to the fact that Lois had completely disappeared. "I have come directly back by the way we came. There is not a living creature in this street—ah, yes! Some one sitting on a doorstep; it is that poor cripple who begs in the gardens."

He felt in his pockets for some sous and stopped with a kind word for the beggar. He stood in the middle of the dark little *Rue Paradis* and talked pleasantly with the man, and then it occurred to him to ask if he had seen a young American lady walking alone. The beggar was loud in his protestations. He called on Heaven to witness that he had seen no sign of any young American lady, but if Milord would but bestow sous, to the number of at least twenty, he would help him to look for her. Before Manning could answer he heard a familiar voice behind him, and, turning, he saw Lois come out of one of the dark doorways.

"Arthur!" she exclaimed, slipping her hand through his arm; "Arthur, you have come at last! You have saved me from that dreadful man! He ran after me—he—" And then she broke down completely, and, hiding her face on his arm, she sobbed with terror, fatigue, and extreme relief.



"You poor little girl!" said Manning, kindly; "you have been frightened to death. How did it ever happen that you got separated from the rest of us?"

"I was tired," faltered Lois, recovering herself; "I couldn't walk so fast, and none of you noticed. And then that dreadful beggar —"

Arthur turned quickly. In the surprise and relief of finding Lois he had delayed justice for the beggar, but he was now too late: the man had disappeared.

"I wish I could get him!" said Manning, savagely. "The scamp! And to think that I gave him money! I'll look him up yet and hand him over to the authorities — if there are any."

"Oh, never mind him!" said Lois. "Now that you have come, it is no matter. You see, I lost my way, and then he saw me giving some money to some children and followed me. The only thing for me to do was to hide. I thought I should have to stay in that dark, dreadful place all night, and I was wondering what I should do when the people who live there should come and find me. They might have been friends of the beggar and would have let him in."

She shuddered and began to cry again.



“Come! come!” said Arthur, who had the usual masculine repugnance for feminine tears. “It is all over now, and we won’t think of the creature again. He only wanted all the money you would give him. I am sorry we walked so fast. You ought to have told us, and Miss Stuart and I could easily have waited for you. She has been in the old town a good many times, she told me, and knows her way about thoroughly. What a remarkable girl she is!”

And in order to distract Lois’s mind from her adventure and with the desire to cheer her, he proceeded to talk about Diana; and Lois listened. And before they had turned out of the *Rue Paradis* she knew!

The next day was the first of May. Early in the morning when the girls awoke they heard the steady hum of voices, which in that land of conversation is seldom absent, but which on notable occasions becomes deepened until it is not unlike the roar of water. Later, when they got up and looked out of the windows, they beheld a complete transformation of the usual familiar scene. The square below was full of booths made of gay-colored canvas, and tables, each one of which was surmounted by a huge blue, red, or yellow umbrella. An immense number



of tin articles, of all shapes and sizes, gleamed in the sun. Piles of chairs awaited purchasers. The rows of tables under the newly leaved trees were filled with every variety of ware, from hairpins to farming implements, from toys to household goods. All the gaming-tables were in readiness, with live birds in cages for prizes. It was May Day, and the great semi-annual fair had begun.

As the day wore on the scene became more and more animated and fascinating. All the way up the narrow street that climbed the hill venders were stationed, while down another and wider road there was a sale of horses and donkeys and other livestock. Men with great quantities of red and blue toy balloons and huge carts filled with oranges added to the color, as did also the blue smocks of the peasants who had gathered from all the country round for this great occasion. Music of various kinds, from hand-organs and hurdy-gurdies to drums and tin horns, made the day hideous, and a fierce, hot wind raised clouds of dust, but bargaining went on briskly. The pavements in front of the cafés were filled with people at the little tables, while hundreds of others walked about, and there was no end to the noise, confusion, and color.

Freddy, with money in his pockets, started forth



early to enjoy the day. He had picked up a sufficient quantity of French to enable him to say all that he wished, and it was mixed with a smattering of Provençal that was convenient for conversation with the peasants. He began by having his picture taken by a man who had established his apparatus on the sidewalk by the hotel, and who produced tintypes with astonishing ease and rapidity. Freddy next turned his attention to the merry-go-round, "*les chevaux du bois*," as they say in French, which, American in origin, was doing a rushing business in Provence. A patient horse walked around and around in a small inner circle, working the machinery, and an equally patient man sat grinding out the music.

Freddy rode until he was so giddy that tables, and booths, and wooden horses seemed to be dancing a jig before him, and then, scattering sous with a princely air among the gaping peasant children, he strolled into the crowd with as much dignity as extreme dizziness would permit. Presently he met a beggar who was leading a ram of great proportions and with huge, fierce horns. Freddy looked at this oddly assorted couple with interest, wondering why a man who owned so stout a mutton as that should need to beg. He followed them for a time, for the



animal possessed a strange fascination for him. He had seen many flocks of sheep with their shepherds since he had been at Hyères, and had often wished that he could walk in their midst in a long garment and carrying a staff, with one or two intelligent dogs running along to keep the timid sheep together. He wondered if this ancient beggar could once have been a shepherd who was now reduced to beggary, and who was unwilling to part with the last member of his flock.

“I mean to ask him,” said Freddy to himself; and stepping up to the man he entered into conversation, never a difficult matter in the south of France.

He soon discovered that the old peasant was looking for a possible purchaser for his ram, which was, he said, of all animals the most gentle and docile; his name was Joujou, and he followed those he loved as a dog follows his master. As the old man set forth in glowing terms the charms of his animal, a wild and daring desire formed itself in Freddy's mind. How much he would like to buy such a nice and attractive pet! What fun it would be to own a ram, and how much more interesting and unusual than a mere dog! It would be a great pleasure to have him to play with at Hyères, and quite easy to have him boxed up and sent by express when they



left Hyères, as they would soon be doing. Freddy did not trouble himself much about future contingencies; the present was all sufficient for him.

He asked the price of the treasure, and found it to be the absurdly low one of ten francs. He had expected the man to say twenty at least. Freddy had ten francs tucked away in a box at the hotel. He supposed from past experience that his mother would raise some objections to this new scheme, but he felt confident that they could as usual be overruled. Desiring the man to stay just where he was until he should return with the money, he hurried away from the astonished beggar and elbowed his way through the crowd.

When he reached the hotel, his mother was not to be found. He looked for her in every possible place, but she was nowhere to be discovered; neither was any member of the party. They had all gone off in various directions, each supposing Freddy to be with some one else. In fact, Mrs. Webster had grown quite accustomed to allowing him to go about the new town alone.

"Well, she's not here, so I can't ask her," thought Freddy; "and the money's mine to buy just what I like. Mother said so when she gave it to me. She never said I couldn't buy a ram, so I mean to buy it."



He found his money, and was about to run downstairs again when he happened to glance out of the window, and the scene was so fascinating that he lingered there for a few minutes. His eye presently caught sight of a group of peasant children who were walking briskly up one of the streets, each one carrying a long stick like a cane. There were three girls and a boy. As Freddy watched them, the four with one accord began to limp, all leaning heavily upon their staffs. They suddenly appeared to be very lame, and, hobbling painfully along, they soon attracted the attention of some of the crowd; and then, standing in a group, they seemed to be singing, although Freddy was so far above them and the noise in the street was so great that he could not hear them. He watched them for a few minutes.

“If they ain’t the greatest fakes going!” he said aloud. “They’re no more lame than I am, and not as much, for I’ve had a broken leg. I wonder if they’re just doing it for larks or if they’re really poor. Jiminy, but I’ve got an idea!”

He retired from the window and began to hop wildly about the room; then he rushed to his trunk and dragged forth from its depths a dark smock. The small boys of the country wore such garments,



and Mrs. Webster had bought one for the sole purpose of seeing how Freddy would look in it, but of which he felt a profound horror because it gave the effect of a petticoat. Now, however, it was just what he needed. He slipped it on, and, with a hasty look in the mirror, he decided that he looked precisely like the boys of Hyères, in spite of his round, rosy face, which was so different from the pale, thin countenances of the natives. He was sure that he would never be recognized by the crowd as a foreigner.

A convenient staff stood in the corner, brought home recently from a walk. This he seized, and, with his ten francs in his hand in the shape of two large silver pieces, he tore downstairs at headlong speed and out of the front door before any one standing could have time to look at him. None of his friends were to be seen, and in a moment he had mingled with the crowd. He found the old beggar, who was beginning to lose hope of ever seeing the boy again, and in a moment the silver coins and the gigantic Joujou had changed owners. Just as quickly the old peasant was lost to view, and Freddy Webster was left in sole possession of a *mouton* of such huge proportions that it seemed to him that he had assumed charge of a pony, and of one with



the additional inconvenience of a pair of very long sharp horns.

No sooner was the rope in his hands than Freddy, leaning heavily on his stick as he had seen the peasant children do, began to limp painfully. He soon felt with satisfaction that he was attracting some attention. He hesitated to ask for alms, but he was afraid that if he did not he would arouse suspicion in this land of beggars. He concluded to sing a little first, and he cast about in his mind for a song suitable for the occasion. In a fever of patriotism he longed to try "Yankee Doodle," or even the difficulties of "The Star-spangled Banner," but he felt that it must be something French, and the only native song that occurred to him was "*Sur le Pont d'Avignon*," which Hope was forever singing.

He raised his clear, high voice, and very soon a little crowd stood about him. With one hand holding his stick and the other clasping a horn of the ram, he stood there singing, and he was enjoying himself very thoroughly when his eyes fell upon four astonished faces. To express it mildly, these faces seemed petrified with amazement; for they were those of Mrs. Webster, Hope, Reginald, and Philip Sargent.



The singer paused in the middle of a bar, a word half sung upon his lips, his voice dying away in a quaver of dismay.

"Wherever did you come from?" said he. "I'm having such fun, and I suppose you'll go and make me stop, mother."

"Freddy!" exclaimed his long-suffering parent. "What *are* you doing? And what is that horrible animal? Don't touch the frightful creature! It may hurt you."

"Oh, no, he won't! He belongs to me, and his name is Joujou. He's very tame and nice, and I guess they'll keep him all right at the hotel, and we can get him home on the steamer very comfortably. I bought him just now with my own money, mother, and he was very cheap indeed. I thought I'd rather have him than a dog, and you know you said I could have another dog when we get back to Baltimore."

"You have bought it, Freddy? Is the child crazy?" She turned to Hope. "What shall I do, Hope?"

Hope, convulsed with laughter which she vainly tried to stifle, could not speak. Reginald made no effort to suppress his appreciation of the situation, and laughed loudly and wildly. Philip Sargent



alone preserved a straight face. The crowd of natives who had been listening to the singing and had watched the meeting, talked, laughed, and gesticulated. Mrs. Webster, with a tragic expression and an appealing gesture, turned to Sargent.

"You must help me," said she. "Was there ever so unfortunate a mother! To think of my son singing for *sous* in a crowd, and — and — how shall we ever get rid of that dreadful animal?"

As though in answer to her question, Joujou began to butt violently. Freddy loosened his hold involuntarily, and the crowd scattered to right and left. Joujou recognized his opportunity, and scampered off, in search, no doubt, of his former master. The crowd closed again and he had disappeared. Mr. Sargent and Reginald with one accord each seized an arm of Freddy and hurried him from the scene, followed by Mrs. Webster, supported by Hope. They soon reached the seclusion of the hotel, and Freddy was consigned to that of his bed for the rest of the day, lamenting bitterly the loss of his Joujou, his ten francs, and his good time. Toward evening, Hope, looking from her window to watch the crowds, saw an aged peasant disappearing up the hill. He was leading a portly ram.

"It has been a good day's work for them!" she said.



## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN.

THE time had now come to bid farewell to the south, and three days later after the May Day fair the party left Hyères for Paris. The Mannings expected to return to America within a few weeks, and Philip Sargent had arranged to sail by the same steamer, but the three girls and the Websters had planned from the beginning of their trip to pass the summer in England.

The girls talked with enthusiasm of what they intended to do and where they would prefer to go in England, but each one secretly and for a different reason felt a strong disinclination to being reduced once more to the original five who had sailed from New York on that sparkling October day that seemed so long ago. It was in Paris one day that the truth came out, and it was the arrival of the American mail that brought it to the surface.

"Girls, I want to talk to you," said Diana, coming to her friends' room with an open letter in her hand.



"Not bad news, is it?" asked Hope, with a quick glance at her face.

"Wait until we get somewhere to talk," returned Diana. "I can't breathe in the house. Don't be too much frightened; it is rather bad news, but not the worst. Mother isn't very well."

They put on their hats and went out into the sweet spring sunshine in which great, gay, beautiful Paris was rejoicing. They soon reached the *Champs Élysées*, and hiring chairs, they sat in a shady and secluded nook and discussed the new situation.

"It is a letter from father," said Diana; "he says that mother has had a wretched cold and is really very miserable. He doesn't want me to come home, for he says she isn't ill enough for that, but she misses me very much, and he wants to know what our plans are. I can read between the lines easily enough; they want me, but they don't want to tell me to come. Then, too, I used so much money in going to the south of France from Germany that I know I ought not to spend any more. Father doesn't say anything about that, for he hates so to deny me anything. He feels so badly about not having as much to give me as he used to have. I know I ought not to go to England for that reason, if for no other. At any rate, I am going home."



Hope and Lois were both silent for a few moments. Lois was the first to speak.

"You will go with the Mannings, I suppose?"

"Yes. It is such a fortunate thing that I can."

"Yes," said Lois. And then after a pause she repeated it: "Yes!"

"I am so sorry," said Hope. "You have had so many disappointments, Di. The whole trip seems to have been a failure for you."

"A failure?" echoed Diana. "Oh, no, not a failure. I have had a fearful disappointment about my painting, but — but —"

"You have had something to make up for it," said Lois, calmly.

"Yes," said Diana, wondering how she knew.

Hope changed the subject quickly. "And what shall we do?" she asked. "Must Lois and I stay with the Websters when we would so much rather — at least, when you and the others are leaving us? How we shall miss you! I feel a desire to go with you that is almost impossible to withstand. We have all had such good times together, you know."

"You needn't try to explain it," said Lois, with an odd little laugh.

"Then, too, I have used such a lot of money, just as Di has," continued Hope. "If I am the



only poor member of the party left, what shall I do? Lois and Mrs. Webster both have so much to spend that they won't like my scrimpings. And then to be left with Mrs. Webster! Lois, what shall we do?"

"I must think it over," said Lois.

"But if I were to go and you didn't, you would be left alone with the Websters again, just as you were in Paris before, and it would be a great deal harder for you now than it was then. You wouldn't have — you wouldn't have any one to help you, and you realize more now what Mrs. Webster really is. If I go, you would better go too, Lois."

"I must think it over," said Lois again. And all that day she thought it over.

Hope in the meantime studied her account book and looked at the situation on all sides. "I have spent a great deal more than I ought to have done," she thought. "It is just as Diana said, the journey to the south of France cost so much that I haven't enough left for England. I didn't realize it before. I have grown careless about such things lately; we have been having such a good time."

She drew little lines on the sheet of paper which she had covered with figures, and smiled reminiscently. She had certainly had a good time.

"And no matter what it has cost, I wouldn't



give up the last three months. If we hadn't gone to Avignon, if we hadn't gone to Hyères, we wouldn't — Hope Conway, idiot! Be honest with yourself. You know perfectly well that you are fairly dancing with delight because a chance has suddenly come for you to go home on the same steamer with Philip Sargent. Now, shall I go or stay? Where does my duty lie? Was there ever such a mixed-up thing as duty? And, after all, why should it be my duty not to go on the same steamer with him? Putting him out of the question, imagining that he is going to Russia for the summer (oh, I am glad he isn't!), what ought I to do? I believe I will lay the whole thing with that exception — it is a big one — before Mrs. Manning, and I will not only ask her advice, but I will take it."

And Mrs. Manning advised her to go home. "I am sorry to have you leave out England," said she, "but you will surely have an opportunity to come again, and from what you tell me I am afraid you haven't enough money left for travelling with people who can spend as much as Mrs. Webster and Lois. You will find that you are constantly being drawn into expense, because you won't want to keep them from doing things, or make them



uncomfortable by not doing what they do. It would be very different if Diana were to be with you, for then you two could stay out of things together. It is too bad, Hope! I can't bear to advise you in this way, but I don't see how I can conscientiously say anything else; you have so little money left."

"Oh, I don't mind as much as you think," said Hope, honestly. "I would rather go home with you all than see England with Mrs. Webster, even if I had lots of money."

"Oh, then it is all right," said Mrs. Manning; and if she saw a little deeper than Hope intended, she gave no sign.

"I only hope Lois will decide to go, too," observed Hope, as she was leaving the room. "I don't want to leave her again; but, then, Lois is so different now. She doesn't feel as she did about Mrs. Webster, and I think she will go with us."

But sometimes a few months, or even a few weeks, have brought such a new turn of affairs that what a short time ago would have been the wrong thing to do has suddenly become the right, and what was once a selfish course now develops into one of self-denial. Lois, alone in her room that afternoon while her friends were doing some of the



sights of Paris, fought a battle that left its marks on her character through all the years to come.

She had excused herself from going with them on the plea that she had seen so much of Paris in the winter, and, when they were all gone, she locked herself into her room. It was the same that she had occupied when she was there before, and as she went to the window and looked out upon the roofs and chimney-pots, she remembered the day when she and Freddy, after sitting in this window, had started for their walk and had met Arthur Manning on the steps.

“How much has happened since then,” she thought; “and how foolish I was ever to think that he could like me! He is so good and true and noble, and so is Diana. What am I that he should ever think of me? I am thankful to have had a little bit of his friendship. If I stay here, I may lose even that. If I go over on the same steamer, I could see something of him, and after we get back perhaps!—and if I stay, I must give up everything, and just be with Mrs. Webster and Freddy, and she will be just what she was in Paris over again. And I want to go! I want to go! I cannot give him up entirely! He isn’t engaged to Di yet. He might change. Perhaps Di doesn’t care



for him as I do — but she does! She does! I must not go.”

And so all the afternoon she thought about it, and when Hope came to the room on her return Lois had reached a decision.

“Well,” said Hope, looking at her narrowly; “I am afraid it isn’t well! You look — Lois, I verily believe you have been crying!”

Hope had come in with a radiant expression on her own face, her eyes dancing with fun, and a bright color in her cheeks. She had enjoyed the afternoon, and deep down in her heart was a happy consciousness of something good that the future was holding for her which colored the present with a rosy light. Now the laughter died out of her eyes, and a deep sympathy for Lois took its place.

“Tell me all about it, dear,” she said, putting her arm tenderly about her friend.

“Oh, Hope,” whispered Lois as she clung to her, “I am not going, though I want to, oh, I want to! I am going to stay with Mrs. Webster. Don’t try to persuade me to go. I know that I must not. I shall get over it — I shall enjoy England after — after I get used to being without you all.”

And Hope understood and could sympathize, and so, little by little, Lois unfolded the whole sad



little story, for Hope was always a safe confidante; and Lois found it easier to bear her trouble when she had once talked out freely.

"Diana must never know," she said, "and that is one of the many reasons why it is better for me not to go home with you. Oh, Hope, if you were only going to stay! If you would only come with us to England!"

"But don't you see, dearest, that I can't? I really haven't the money, Lois. I have consulted Mrs. Manning, and she agrees with me that it would be most foolish for me to stay with you and Mrs. Webster. Much as I want to see England, I really oughtn't to do it."

"But, Hope, if you would only stay as my guest! Now don't exclaim, but just wait until I tell you. You know perfectly well that I can have all the money I want for this trip. You know, too, that father and mother would a thousand times rather have you with me than have me stay alone with Mrs. Webster. They didn't like my doing that before, and they won't be able to understand why I deliberately do it again, and I can't explain to them why I must do it. When they hear that you went home because you couldn't afford to stay, they will be sure to say that I ought to have asked you to



stay as my guest. Now, Hope, you know they will."

"Oh, my dear, I couldn't! It would be taking so much."

"Hope! What silly, ridiculous pride! Haven't you and Di and I shared everything all our lives? Is it an unusual thing for people to ask their friends to visit them in this way? You know very well that it is done all the time. And you ought to see England, Hope—and oh, if you would only stay with me! I feel as if I couldn't bear it if you all go and leave me. Hope, dear Hope, please stay!"

Hope did not speak for a few minutes. She did not wish to stay. Had not her heart been dancing all day because she was going with the others? And now she saw the plan fading away. She realized the truth of all that Lois had said; she knew that there was no good reason for not accepting her invitation. She was not needed at home during the summer, for she was not expected, and it had been her desire for years to see England, as every one knew. How should she be able to explain her return, to her own family as well as to Mr. and Mrs. Putnam? How could she explain it to herself?

"I must think it over," she said presently to Lois,



just as Lois had said the same words in the morning, "we won't talk about it any more to-night; I will tell you in the morning." But all the time she knew what her decision would be.

She went early to her room that evening. "Now, Jane Hope Conway," she said to herself as she closed the door and bolted it, "we will see what sort of stuff you are made of. Do you mean to tell me that you are going to desert your oldest friend when she needs you? Poor little Lois! She is so brave and sweet she sets you a good example. Are you going to give up England when all your days you have been plotting and planning to get there? Are you going to—in short, are you going to make a fool of yourself? For if you give it all up just for the sake of going home on the same steamer with Philip Sargent, you will be making a fool of yourself. If he cares anything about you—yes, you'd better blush, you little idiot!" (she was gazing at herself in the mirror as she held this conversation) "you will see him again somewhere. If you give up England simply in order to go on that steamer, you will be deliberately running after him, and I for one shall be ashamed of you!"

She nodded her head slowly and emphatically at the face in the mirror. "You goose, you! Quick,



now, before you have time to weaken ! Run for all you are worth, and tell Lois." And within three minutes there was a sharp tap on Lois's door.

"Lois, I am going to stay with you," said Hope, thrusting in her head. "No, I can't come in now, but I've made up my mind. I thought perhaps you would sleep better if you knew it to-night. Good-night ! Can't stop — awfully sleepy, you know — at least I'm not sleepy, but it's very late. Only nine o'clock, you say ? Why, I thought it was midnight ! But I am going to England with you, so there is nothing else to be said. Good-night !" The door closed again and she was gone.

The next day not one of the party suspected that Hope had been awake most of the night. She was a bit paler than usual, but that was all. Her spirits seemed higher and her laugh merrier than ever, and it was the opinion of all of her friends that the new plan was very much to her liking. Hope never did anything by halves.

And so Diana and the Mannings and Philip Sargent sailed for home, and Hope, Lois, and the Websters crossed the Channel ; and when the day of parting came, both Hope and Lois felt that they had decided for the right, hard as it had been to reach that decision.



It was not until October that the three friends met again, and then once more they were in Hazelmere. One day, some three weeks after their arrival, they were sitting in the room that was still called Diana's studio, although she could never use it as such again.

"How strangely things turn out," said she, as she looked about at the half-finished sketches and the canvases that stood with their faces to the wall; "I thought when the German oculist told me that I could never paint again, that life held nothing more that I could care for. How little I knew that my very misfortune was leading me to the south of France to meet Arthur. Oh, girls, dear, I wish you were both as happy as I am! I begin at the hospital next week. And even if I never practice much nursing, I can be a help to Arthur, and understand his profession better."

"Oh you needn't think that you have all the happiness there is going," said Hope, laughing. She had a thick letter in her pocket as she spoke, which bore the New York postmark, and Philip Sargent had been the first person she had seen on the wharf when their steamer came in. "We did have a good time, didn't we, in spite of all our trials and tribulations? How we did long to go and see a



bit of life, and what a time we had finding a chaperon! And then to have discovered Mrs. Webster and Freddy, of all people — and think of her staying abroad another winter!”

“I think she is going to stay longer than that,” said Lois.

“Why, what do you mean?” asked Hope. “I had a feeling that you knew something to-day that you intended to spring on us.”

“Hope! You always think you know so much!”

“But what is it?” asked Diana.

“Mrs. Webster is going to marry Sir William Beauchamp!”

“Lois!”

“Cecil’s brother?”

“Yes. He is a widower with a son and three daughters, and a place in Surrey, and, I think, not much money. Cecil has often spoken of them and told me a good deal about them.”

“Why, we met him!” exclaimed Hope. “I remember him perfectly. So she has found a permanent prop to lean upon! And is it possible that he is going to undertake the care of Freddy? I have always heard a good deal about English courage, and this proves it. But what about Cecil, Lois?”



He told me he was coming over to 'the States' this winter. Is he coming?"

"No," replied Lois; "he isn't coming."

"H-m-m!" said Hope. "Poor Cecil! I think I must put him in the book I am going to write this winter."

"Don't put the rest of us in, I beg of you!" exclaimed Diana.

"No danger of that. You and Arthur are entirely too humdrum. And, after all, I shall not take my characters from life; that isn't the highest form of art."

"That sounds very much like Mr. Sargent," said Diana. "So you are going to begin to write, Hope?"

"Of course. You know I always intended to."

"Yes, I know, but circumstances sometimes alter cases."

"There are no circumstances in my case."

"Oh, aren't there? Well, I hope, at least, that you will be original."

"And why shouldn't I be original?" asked Hope, with some asperity.

"Because, even though there may be no circumstances, there is always the great undeniable fact of Philip Sargent."

"That is true," said Lois, quietly, "but Hope will always be Hope."























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